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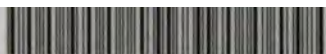
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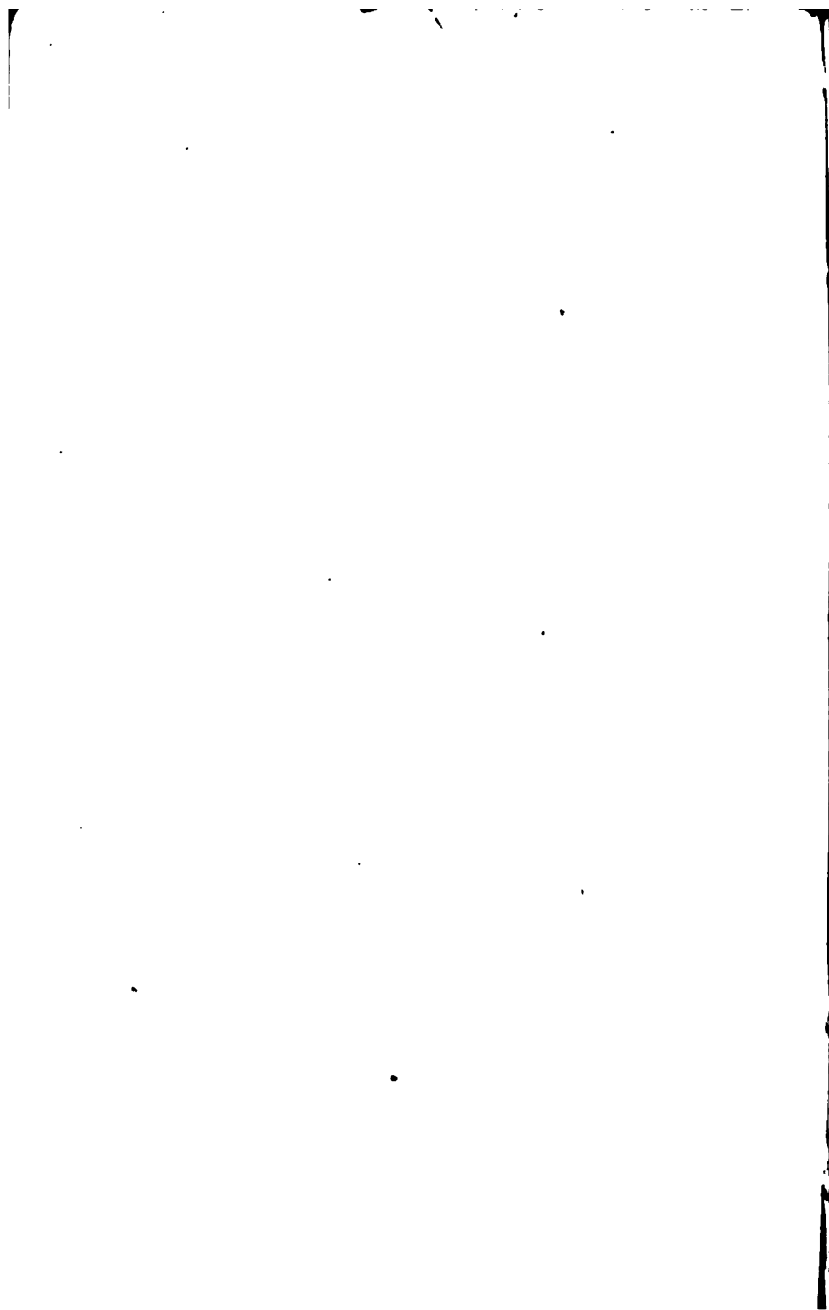


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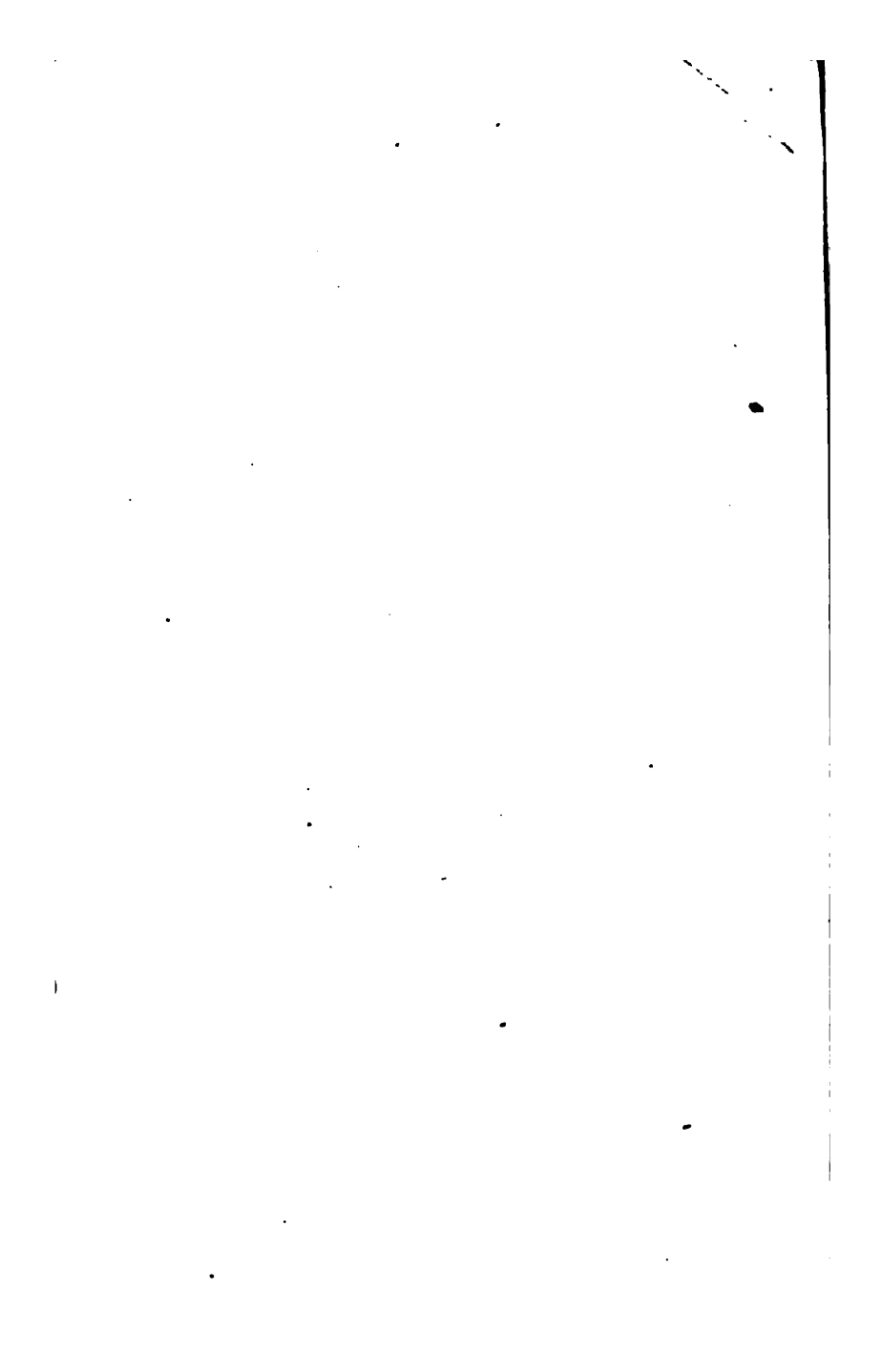
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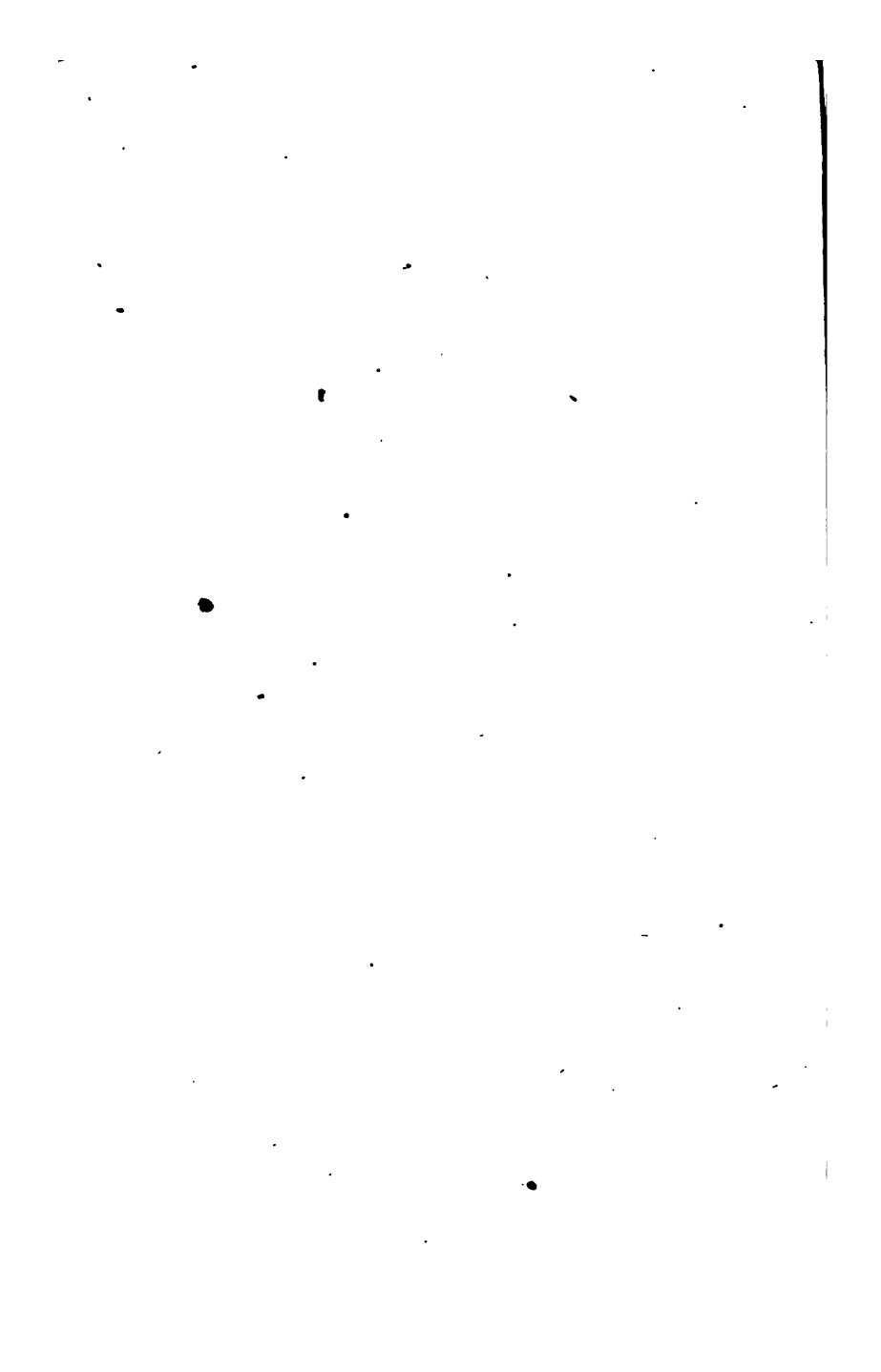
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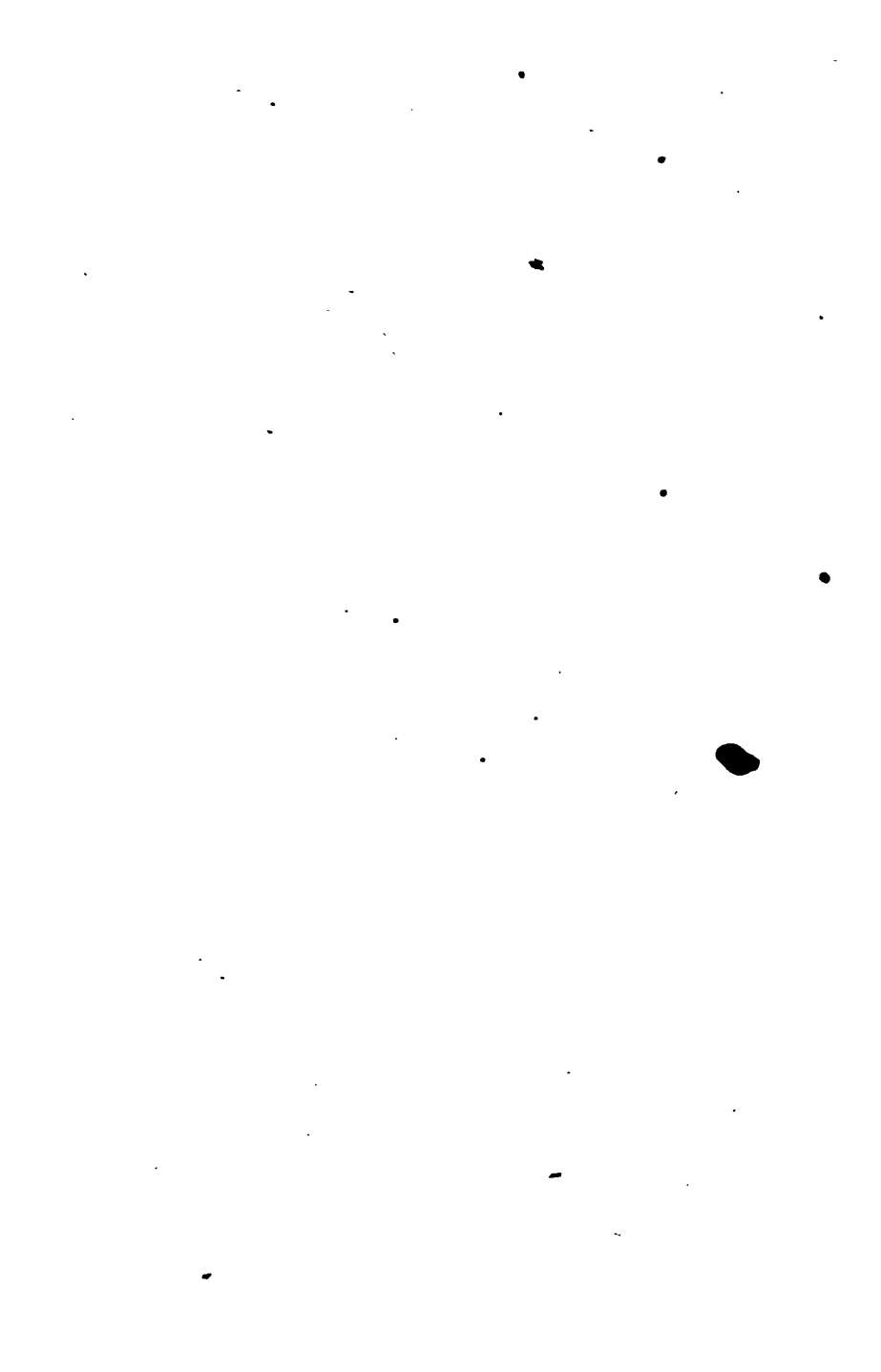


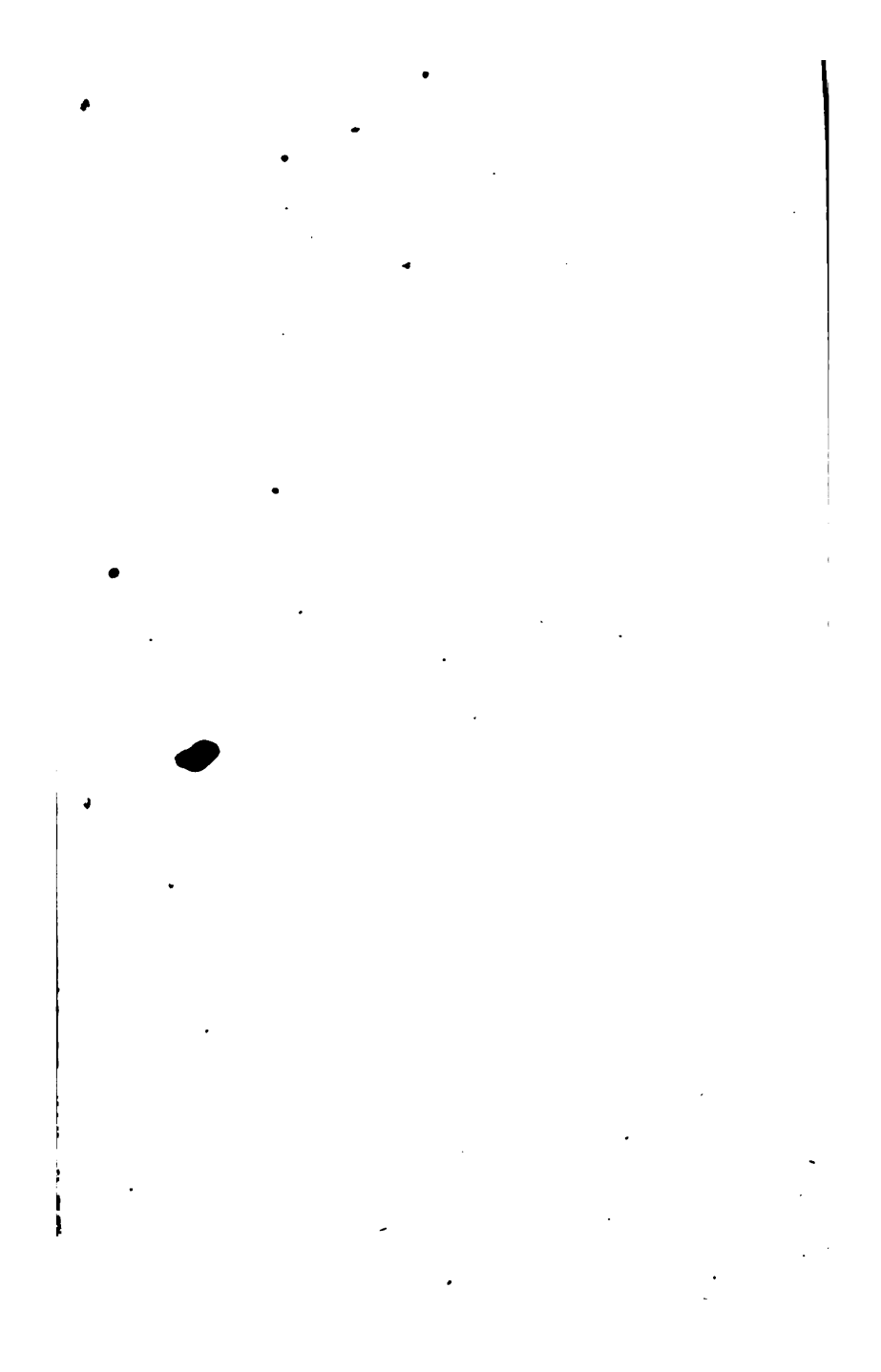












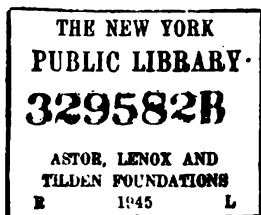
W A I F W O O D.

A Novel.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"EASY NAT," "THE INDIAMAN'S DAUGHTER," "MORLEY," &c.

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W A I F W O O D .

CHAPTER I.

A STORM IN THE FOREST.

TOWARDS the close of a beautiful day in the month of November, 1832, while travelling through the Georgia part of the Cherokee nation, on business of the U. S. Government among the Indians, I was aroused from a sleepy sort of reverie by a joyful whinner from the faithful beast I strode, and my attention called to the welcome sight of a human habitation near at hand. It was one of those rude log huts of which we see so many since the removal of the Indians, but at that time they were "few and far between," and to the weary traveller in those parts were like the oasis to the exhausted wanderer in the desert. Happy in having come upon quarters in such good time, I determined, mangre the uninviting appearance a nearer approach gave me of the premises, to solicit accommodations for the night, whether the occupants were Unakas (whites) or Indians, for I had ridden far and was both tired and hungry; as was my horse, I judged too, for of his own

1

accord he walked directly to the cabin fence and halted. Before I could call out, the noise of hoofs caused a little dirty-white shockhead to be thrust out of the half open door in alarm and surprise (for travellers were of rare occurrence,) and before I could speak, to be as suddenly withdrawn as if it had seen a bogle: the next moment however, there cautiously presented herself the mother, for such I took her to be from the miniature likeness I discovered in the dirty little urchin aforesaid, and some half dozen other little shockheads of both sexes, as dirty as himself, who obtruded their begrimed visages wherever there was head-room, beside their dam as she stood in the carefully compressed aperture and demanded my business. She was a woman of some 35 or 40 years, and might once, for aught I know, have been tolerably comely had she lived in a part of the country where soap and water and good horn combs were occasionally put in requisition. I had seen enough of the interior of the hut, and the filthiness of its inhabitants to change my determination as to stopping, as briefly as it was formed, so replied to her question by asking how far it was to the next house. Taking courage at finding this was all I wanted; she opened the door a little wider and with the regular backwoods intonation answered, "to the next house, you say!" "well now, I don't know adzackly stranger, but I allow 'taint more nor two or three or four mile to the outside." The shrivelled, skinny, withered figure of an old granny I had not seen before, now forced herself in among the group—one of the original progenitors doubtless of the hopeful bevy around her, and as loathsome a piece of humanity to look at as man

ever set eyes on—a perfect counterpart of Shakspeare's Hecate, backed up by the combined ugliness of the "secret, black and midnight hags,"—the weird sisters. "The next house; why that's old Major McClure's, and it's a good six mile off, an' a bad road at that!" croaked the old beldame—"You warn't raised in these yere parts, war ye stranger?" asked the younger of the two. I told her "no," and that I was a "Yankee." As I pronounced the awful word they both withdrew a step or two in evident alarm, "as though it were a spell to conjure up the devil with," and the children, worse frightened, were out of sight in a twinkling—"A Yankee!" gasped the young woman—"A Yankee!" reiterated the old crone at her back,—“Lord 'a massy! well sir, I don't allow it's more nor a mile or sich a matter to Major McClure's on the hull, sence I come to think on it, an' its a monsus plain way; am sartin you can't help missin it—I wish ye well!” and with this she began closing the door, as if anxious to be safely and quickly rid of one who even while sitting quietly on his horse might play them some “infernal Yankee trick.”—Thanking them for the information and the comforting assurance that I couldn't help “missing it,” I threw a piece of silver into the door, (upon which they put a diabolical construction no doubt,) and put off for Major McClure's. The sun was fast declining to his rest and his departing rays, falling upon the rich parti-colored foliage of the hickory, chesnut, maple and persimmon, lent such beauty and splendor to the scene that I almost wished like the boy in the story, that it might be “always, autumn.” Glancing towards the west I observed that notwithstanding the sun shone

out so brilliantly, dark masses of clouds were gathering heavily in that quarter, and extending themselves gradually round the verge of the horizon, foreboding a change in the weather. Still I apprehended no interruption from it before I could be safe from its influences. Uncertain however, as to the distance I might have to travel to find a shelter, I put spurs to my steed and pushed on. After riding on about a couple of miles, as briskly as the undulations of the country would permit, the sound of rushing water fell upon my ear, and turning the point of a sharp spur of the mountain, I came abruptly upon a small though exceedingly rapid torrent. Owing to the steepness of the mountains that shut in closely on either side, the road, of a necessity at that time, traversed up the rocky bed of the creek for about an hundred yards, and then, winding out to the right, left it altogether. Tall laurels and dogwoods, growing upon its banks, and overhanging the swift stream till their branches interlocked, gave it at that hour a dark and fearful aspect, and threw a gloom over the passage, which, with the never ceasing turmoil of the waters, rendered it to a stranger almost frightful to look upon. Giving my horse a free rein to slack his thirst at ease, I tried with my eyes to penetrate the dim obscurity of the pass, but in vain, for the sun had gone down, and although not yet night a cloudy pall, like twilight mourning for departed day, was overspreading the heavens, shutting out the stars, and bringing on a premature darkness. Just as I was drawing up my rein with the intention of taking the stream, the shaking of some bushes immediately below me caused my horse to start and snort rather ominously,

and the next instant a deer, or some other large animal rushed from the thicket, cleared the stream at a bound and darted up the steep mountain side like lightning; at the same moment my nag, taking the alarm, was off at a tangent, dashing up the torrent, as though old Nick himself were at his heels; to the imminent danger of his own and rider's neck and limbs. Bending to avoid the impending branches that threatened my chapeau, I soon issued safely into the open road again, and would fain have slackened off a little; but Bucephalus had not yet gotten over his fright, and on he flew like the wind, and it was not until we had gained the summit of the mountain that I could check his flight. Fear had taken complete possession of him, and he trembled in every joint, while the perspiration ran from him in streams. By soothing caresses I soon calmed his fears and we pursued our way. I now began to look ahead for a little, but no light could I descry: all above and around was "black as Erebus:" not even one solitary star shone out to cheer me. Night had set in, in good earnest, and now the wind which had hitherto been slumbering calmly, began to sigh, fitfully and coldly, through the agitated tree-tops, foreboding an unpleasant drive and a wet jacket to the unfortunate straggler, unless some place of shelter offered soon. My jaded horse had relapsed into a walk, and I let him keep it, for the country, bad enough before, was now getting more rough and broken, and the road tortuous and uncertain. Another young mountain we toiled up, and again I looked around for the cheering cabin light. Thick darkness was all that met my anxious gaze, and my spirits began to sink within me. Was I in the

right road? might I not have passed McClure's, without seeing the house? I think four miles, was the maximum distance the young woman had given me; but the old crone had said six, and I must have ridden at least ten, I judged. She perhaps was right when she said I couldn't help "missin it," although I thought it a mere "*lapsus linguae*" occasioned by her trepidation at finding herself vis-a-vis with a horrible Yankee. The wind was momentarily increasing and to add to my discomfort large drops of rain came pattering down, giving token that the storm was not far off. Buttoning my coat to my chin, and drawing my cap over my brow, I put spurs to my weary beast and galloped on, pitying him as I did so from my very heart, but determined right or wrong to go-ahead, for turning back I could'nt think of. Louder and more fiercely howled the wind; faster and thicker came the rain; but still in face of wind and rain, "my steed and I" urged on our cheerless, dubious way. But the worst of the storm was yet to come, and compared with it all I had as yet experienced, was mere child's play. We had nearly reached the apex of another of those long steep hills, when the reserved fury of the elements seemed suddenly to burst upon us at one full sweep. Never shall I forget that fearful night; it blew a perfect hurricane: nothing that was opposed to the full force of the tempest could withstand it. Large trees that had borne up against the storms, it may be, of some centuries, came creaking and crashing to the ground, with an awful noise; bearing with them others of less size, which had stood around them like humble friends, perchance, for many a year. .

Screened as I was by the crest of the hill, I escaped the worst of it, though my situation teemed probably with as much or more real peril; being exposed to the falling timber and large fragments of trees, which, hurled through the air with inconceivable velocity, came whizzing, tumbling and thundering down, around me, as thick as hail-stones. Suddenly my poor horse, which had maintained his onward course, as steadily as was possible under the increasing difficulty of the task, stopped short, and refused to proceed another step; but, trembling, crouched to the earth as if he would fain sink into it.

I was at once perplexed and annoyed. Was there some obstruction of which I was unconscious? In vain I strained my eyes to discover anything: just then the darkness enclosed me as with a pall. In a moment, however, a vivid electric glare, which was as a flood of red and yellow light, illuminated the wild-wood, and discovered in my narrow path an object which gave me a greater start than the previous shock of thunder. Were my eyes "the fools of the other senses?" No, the trembling, agitated brute I rode, evidently saw it, also. There, within reach of his distended nostrils lay an infant child, with one little white arm and hand lifted towards us as if to stay our further progress. Had it been a devil, cloven-foot, horns and all, it could not have sent the life current rushing back to my heart more suddenly: there was something weird-like about that puny form at such an hour, in a place so wild, amid the hurly-burly of that fearful storm. Involuntarily, I glanced on either side, in the mental agitation of the moment, half-expecting to see, I know not how

many elfin shapes of the same description. But a shrill cry, palpably infantine, piercing the temporary lull, assured me it was no fancy sprite but a real flesh-and-blood BABY! Dismounting from my fear-stricken animal, I took the little creature in my arms, and looked anxiously around for another human being, usually considered as an indispensable adjunct, to wit: a mother; but only the wilderness on every side, with here and there a fallen tree, and the poor steed cowering behind me, met my eager gaze. In another moment, the vivid light which had flashed almost continuously for two or three minutes, suddenly ceased, and all was dark again. Re-mounting my horse, with feelings hard to describe, I hugged to my bosom the wondrous little waif of the forest, which in turn clung to me closer than a brother. Then I shouted lustily, demanding a response if any one was within hearing; but the expected answer, if made, was not audible to my ear amid the howling of the storm which as though strengthened by its transient respite, was now at work again. I was pausing to consider whether or not I should seek further for the missing mother, when my reflections were abruptly terminated by the descent of a huge limb, which, wrenched with terrific force from a giant sycamore, came booming to the ground just behind us. Quick as thought, my horse sprang from the tremendous projectile that had well-nigh immolated both steed and rider, and charged at full speed up the rough, hilly road that lay before us. We attained the spur of the hill unharmed, and the weird little one slept upon my bosom!

CHAPTER II.

A HUNTER FROM KENTUCKY.

THE tornado had done its worst and passed on, and, although the wind was still blowing furiously, I felt relieved and comparatively out of danger. Descending the hill, I could perceive that the fury of the tempest had been scarcely felt on that side, and I was wishing in my heart that the domicil of Major McClure might be so fortunate, both on its own account and mine, as to be located safely in the valley which I was approaching, when suddenly a bright glimmering light as I turned one of the windings of the road, broke full upon my sight. The joy and gratitude the tempest-tost mariner feels when he discovers the long looked for beacon light, was mine at that moment. My good steed the partner of all my troubles, testified by a whinner loud and long, that he too, participated in my pleasure, and breaking into a gallop, in a moment brought us to the door of the cabin.

Whether this was the house of Major McClure, or not, I neither knew nor cared : it was tenanted, and that was sufficient. I was in no condition to cavil at my quarters neither must they, he, she or it, cavil about their guests, for guests I determined we would be, "will he nill he." The storm continued to rage so

high that the inmates did not hear my "halloo!" as I drove up; but upon repeating it at the top of my lungs, by the time I had dismounted, hitched my horse and loosened my saddle-bags, an old man whose well-developed head was garnished with locks white as snow, appeared at the door, bearing a torch of lightwood. Peering out into the darkness, he asked in a bluff voice, "who's there?"

"A stranger," said I, approaching the door, "who wants quarters for himself and horse."

"Sartin, sartin, stranger; come in, come in out of the weather!—You've had a boistrous drive out, stranger;—I haint seen sich a night as this afore in a coon's age—why I wouldn't turn a dog out in sich a storm, let alone a human."

"Thank you! thank you, kindly!" I replied, "I and my good nag, there, have seen bad weather before to-night; but here is one less able to stand it!" and I extended my sleeping burden to a good old dame, who, I rightly presumed to be the worthy man's wife. She received the precious charge with an expression of mingled wonder and pity, and uttering many an ejaculation of concern for its comfort, bore it to a seat by the cheerful and capacious chimney corner.

"Stranger," said mine host, "You're welcome to the best we have, but that you'll find monsus poor."

"Don't mind me," I rejoined, "I have been used to camp life; but if your good lady can manage for the child, there, I shall be thankful."

"Oh, I dare be sworn she can; can't ye dame?" he exclaimed.

The good woman thus appealed to, looked I thought

not quite so confident. "We're poor folks in these yere parts; 'cept Mister Wright"—said she.

"Never mind neighbor Wright, dame;" interrupted my host, a little impatiently; "hospitality don't allers abide with the rich, but's often the most heartiest in the poor man's cabin. Stranger, there's my hand; you're thrice welcome. Be homely, and take a cheer by the fire. Lemme take your hat and overcoat."

"Thank you; no," I replied, "I fear I have still more out-door work before me, after my tired horse shall have had a brief rest, and perhaps a bite of something to eat."

Both husband and wife gave me a look of surprise; perceiving which, I filled them with still more wonder by relating the singular manner in which I had become possessed of the child, which now in its turn opened its blue eyes and uttered a little plaintive cry; "It appeals to us for its mother," I continued, "and I must go back and look for her."

"If Lu was only here, now!" murmured the good woman, surveying the little morsel of mortality with a somewhat puzzled expression of countenance, and then looking up at her old man.

"Lu is a mixed-blood," said he, "a mighty nice gal she is, too,—belonging to our rich neighbor. She's often here: I wish she was, now;" added mine host turning to me, and scratching his head, dubiously. It was evident he shared the perplexity of his help-meet.

"She was never away so long, afore;" chimed in the dame; "I don't see what's got her! She is almost a darter to me, sir, though her skin is another color."

"Hansome is, that hansome does," said McClure (for that was mine host's name;) thof for that marter, Lu is as hansome as a pictur, when she's rigged up, on a Sunday. She's a house-sarvant, and they do say that young Kale, her master's son, has obtained her freedom. "Praps, wife," he added suggestively "she's gone away a spell to enjoy it."

"No, I reck'n not," rejoined the dame, who was trotting the baby on her knee, with entire success; "she would let us know, in course."

"Well I 'low she would, too; but howsever," said he, going to the door, and looking out, in answer to my horse's peremptory whinner, "while we stand talkin, this ere critter o' yourn stranger, is catchin' cold."

"That's so," said I, and taking my quadrupedal friend (Jack, I called him,) by the bridle, and patting his neck affectionately—for he and I had shared many a hard time, and long, lonely cruise together, I followed my host, and his lightwood torch, to the log hut in which he housed his own horse and the smallest pattern of a cow that I ever set eyes upon. Here, with a few words of sympathy and praise in the pretty ear which he bent forward to me, as he rubbed his nose lovingly against my shoulder, I bestowed my animal in front of a pile of coarse hay,—promising him, "soto voce," his fill of good fat oats on the morrow. I little thought then, that poor Jack was soon to have another master.

When mine host returned with me to the cabin, his wife suggested to him that a cup of milk, warm from the cow, might prove palatable to the "little darling"

in her lap. To this he cordially acceded, and after hastily ramming an iron loggerhead (I believe they call it,) or heater, into the bed of live coals in the capacious fireplace, and lighting a fat pine knot, he took a pewter porringer and went out to the barn again.

It was now my turn to resume the care of the baby, not so much from choice, perhaps, as to enable the good woman ('on hospitable thoughts intent,') to make a little spread of eatibles. In short order a rasher of bacon, centered like a jewel in a setting of cornelian looking eggs, was frying merrily in a spider upon the fire, and a pot of roasted corn coffee was steaming with commendable promptness by its side.

"You wont gain nothin' for going out afore daylight Mister," said the landlord, coming in with the milk; "It is fairing off, but I allow it's dark as a pocket outside the clearin! Wife, whar's the beer? I'll brew you a drink stranger that 'll make yer eyes shine."

With these comforting words, he took the pitcher handed to him by his wife, and drawing a flask of whiskey and a bowl of sugar from a rude cupboard, set briskly about the composition of a beverage which he facetiously denominated "belly-stuff." When the mixture was complete, he took the red-hot iron from the fire and introduced it cordially to the amiable liquid, which forthwith began to sizzle and foam, and emit a fragrance never recognized by Lubin, perhaps, but far more delectable to my olfactories, on that occasion, than the most odoriferous perfumery of the shops. In short, it was a glorious mug of flip. "My sarvice to

ye!" exclaimed the excellent old man, taking, as was the custom there and then, the first libation. It was indeed, a highly acceptable draught after my long exposure to the wind and weather, and my stomach took to it very kindly.

The flip finished, I made a hearty meal while Mrs. McClure occupied herself with administering, with elaborate carefulness, homœopathic quantities of the fresh warm milk to guest No 2—the little WAIF OF THE WOOD. Hearing me apply this phrase to it carelessly among my endearments, the good man of the house said to me, as he took the child in his large, embrowned hands, and smiled at the solicitude of his wife who feared he would hurt it; "What did ye call him?"

"It's not a him; it's a her!" said the dame, in a half-whisper, accompanied by a frown and smile.

"Oh ho! it's a gal baby, is it?" he exclaimed. "And what shall we call yer, my little 'un?"

I explained to him what I meant by waif of the wood.

"Waif let her name be, then, till we know her rightful one," he responded, lifting the slight burden to his weather-worn face.

"Or Waif o' the Wood," I rejoined.

"Waf-wood 'll do, for short," and a kiss, as gentle as ever greeted fair one, was the only baptism that this child ever had.

"Poor little thing!" exclaimed the tender-hearted dame, wiping a tear from her eye with the corner of her apron, and taking the child from her old man, "somebody has a better right to name yer than any

one here." She resumed her former seat in the corner, and laying the infant at full length (and that was not much,) across her knees, she droned a low monotonous tune, until its deep blue eyes, which for some minutes were fixed upon her benevolent countenance almost thoughtfully, had closed in pure unconsciousness.

By this time, we were all seated comfortably by the fire, whose bright glow, illuminating our faces, was sustained by the frequent addition of fragments of red fat pine, from a pile at one side of the immense chimney-place.

Perceiving, perhaps, a shadow of care upon my brow, connected with the night's adventure, McClure sought to dissipate it by his talk.

"I was glad to see ye, Major, take sitch an interest in yer beast, 'fore yer own needcessities was supplied. That's allers my plan, and allers was; an' I never lost a critter yet. Afore we turn in for the night, I'll give him a bait o' corn; but taint safe to give corn to a hoss you know, when he's warm. The Lord knows I've taken as many hard drives in my day as the next man! Many and many's the time I've gone hull days and nights together without a bite of anythink, but I allers managed, somehow or another, to give my hoss a bait when I couldn't start a mou'full for myself, all on 'count o' them ere infernal red-skins. Ah, them was troublous times in old Kaintuck!"

As he spoke, he took down his pipe—a rude dudeen made of a corn-cob and reed—and prepared it for lighting.

Involuntarily, I took out my own meerschauum, but a glance at the sleeping child, and it went back into

my pocket again. "So, sir, you are from Kentucky?"

"Yes, sirr, I warnt raised thar, though: I came from York State, and that you know is a long way off. Yer don't spose, wife, that young woodchuck will mind my smokin, do ye? Lord-a-massy, I believe I was weaned on 'bacoy smoke. However, I'll take only a few whiffs, being's I can't very well help it, now I got started."

"I don't think it would matter, Joe," said his wife encouragingly.

"Wall, praps I'd better not," rejoined McClure, and suffered his pipe to go out.

Rough as he was externally, he had a kind considerate heart. Consoling himself with a quid of "nigger-head," tobacco, he surveyed the child placidly and chewed away, and expectorated, for a few moments in silence.

"Wont you hand me my knittin," said the dame. "Maybe I can knit a few rounds while Waif is sleeping."

As mine host rose and handed to her the yarn, and the half-finished stocking, which she had in progress for his use, I was reminded of what I had before noticed, viz: that he was lame. I inquired the cause. He began to tell me but was interrupted by a knock and the abrupt entrance of a young man.

CHAPTER III.

STRUCK BY LIGHTNING.

THE new-comer, after a hasty, familiar salutation, came forward to the fire, and extended his hands for a share of its welcome heat.

He was about twenty years old; flaxen-haired, blue-eyed, fair complexioned and none the less handsome because a little sunburnt. His nose was aquiline; and though a curve is said to be the line of beauty, it was not in this case an improvement to that useful feature of the face. Still it was not a bad looking organ, by any means, and its defect, if any, was more than counterbalanced by the artistical shape of the nostrils, which with the well-cut mouth and chin, innocent of beard, would have pleased a sculptor.

"Wall, Cale, what on airth has brought you to my poor cabin on sitch a night as this yere?" said McClure, surveying the youth, with an expression I thought not entirely cordial.

"Where is Lu?" inquired the visitor, abruptly; and glanced around the room as if in quest of one whom he expected to see there.

"She haint been here for more nor a week," responded the dame, rising and placing the child upon a bed which stood in the corner.

"Not here? Not been here!" cried the youth, with a look of dismay: "My God, can she have—" The conclusion of the sentence died away upon his tongue, and (to borrow a conceit of Shakspeare's)—

'His coward lips did from their color fly.'

"Can she have what?" said McClure sternly; and regarding the agitated countenance of the other, with obvious interest.

"Can she have run away?" was the response, but rather in the tone of soliloquy.

"Why should she? What could make her, Cale Wright, 'less some devilment o' yer own?" She has not been the same girl since you have made so much of her. I tell yer I don't like it in ye. 'Thar's suthin' wrong: I suspicion you know what."

The old man spoke almost angrily. Still, the youth was too much absorbed by his own feelings to feel the sting of McClure's rebuke.

"She threatened me she would leave for the woods, but I thought she was here safe housed with you, whom she always loved more than father and mother, though they raised her," he rejoined, gazing into the fire.

"Ef she was free, she had a right to go her own way, I reck'n!" said McClure.

"But she might have come and said good-bye to us!" exclaimed the dame sadly. "On'y think of Lu's bein, out on sitch a night as this! But if this'yere week-old baby could stand it, I spose she kin!"

For the first time since he had entered so abruptly, the young man looked with interest at the child which

had now opened her little cerulean eyes and turned their innocent gaze upon him.

"How fair, how pure!" he murmured. "Is it yours, sir?" he added addressing me. "And have you travelled far with it?"

Briefly as possible, I told him how I had come by it. The excited manner of my listener surprised me, and I had scarcely ceased speaking, when he cried out, "My God, my God, it must be she! I will search every covert, but I will find her!" and with these words, he rushed out of the cabin. Mine host and I both rose and hurried to the open door, to call him back, but his retreating footsteps were the only sound we heard in reply.

"Ef he injures that yere gal," exclaimed McClure, "I'll fix his flint for him, yer may bet yer life on 't!"

I had my own suspicions, but said nothing; merely remarking that I could never sleep again, before making another effort to satisfy myself that the mother of that child was not still in the forest, and perishing for the want of succor.

"Ef yer 'sist on gwine," said McClure, "count me in. I'm more used to woodcraft than you, and we can help each other."

I would fain have dissuaded him on account of his lameness, but he would not hear to it. In a few minutes, we were both mounted and on our way to the wood.

The storm had cleared away in part, and we could see many stars; still the lightwood torches we bore were very serviceable, for in numerous places the soft dark soil of the road had been so washed by the rain as to be almost impassable.

I recognized the route by which I had come readily, —indeed there was no other to take, and leading the way myself the old hunter followed me in silence, broken only by an occasional word of encouragement to our horses.

Before long, we heard the shouts of young Wright in the wood, "Lu! Lu!" At length, we overtook him. "For God's sake, tell me, stranger," he cried, raising his hand to my saddle as he walked by my side, "do you think you can go back to the spot where you found that child!"

"I think so," I replied, an immense pine had just fallen near by, and it will serve as a mark."

"By Heaven, if we do not find her, I shall think she has perished!" he exclaimed. "Let me go ahead: I can get on quicker than you." He passed me and hurried forward. We had followed for a few minutes, and I judged we were rapidly nearing the place where I had found the Waif of the Wood, when I was startled by a piercing shriek that seemed to run like cold steel through my panting heart. Driving on as quickly as possible to where the road was obstructed by a fallen tree of immense size, I sprang from my horse, to behold a spectacle that made my blood run cold. A female form lay there, and kneeling by her side and bending over her, was young Wright, moaning and "takin' on" (as the old man called it,) most bitterly.

My first thought was, that it was the mother of little Waif-Wood crushed by the prostrate timber; but upon a closer scrutiny, with the aid of my torchlight, I found that, though she was lifeless, it was not the fallen tree that had killed her, but the same thunder-

bolt, probably, by which it had been shivered and laid low.

"She has been struck by lightning!" said I, after an exclamation of horror, scanning the mark which the terrible current had left upon her face and arm. "Who is she?"

"It is Lu, my own dear Lu," he cried: "I have killed her—I have killed her! Oh, God, why did not this thunderbolt fall upon my head, my poor, poor Lu, instead of yours?" He kissed the unanswering lips repeatedly, and his tears fell upon the marble face.

At this moment McClure came up, and dismounting, pushed the young man aside, in his eagerness to look at the melancholy object before us. The strong glare of his fat pine torch, shining upon his large rough features, betrayed deep the solicitude which filled his big, honest heart.

"I feared it, I feared it!" he groaned, and stood staring at the body, as if awed by the presence of the dead.

"There may be life yet!" cried Cale; and essayed to resume his former place by the body.

With an impatient gesture and tone harsh almost to fierceness, the old man waved him back. "Stand off! You shall not touch her." Then, taking up the inanimate form in his stalwart arms as if it were no heavier than a child's, and pushing gently back the long raven tresses from the forehead, he gazed sorrowfully into her face. "Yer poor critter, you," said he in a voice broken by emotion, "how came you here?" adding in a manner savagely altered, "If Tom Wright has done this, or any of his accursed brood, I'll kill them sartin as the Lord liveth!"

"God knows I would give my life for her!" moaned Cale.

"It may be," said I, producing a flask from my pocket, "that the vital spark is not yet extinct! there is brandy; put it to her lips." McClure did as I suggested, then shook his head despairingly.

"Taint no use, Major: her eyes is sot: she is a goner. Poor Lu; poor Lu! It 'll go nigh to break my old woman's heart. Major, I'll git on to my hoss, and nen you hand her up to me. Take her gently, now! the blood in her veins is as red as yourn or mine, though her skin be a shade darker."

This he said, as he placed the fragile form into my arms, and remounted his animal which stood close by my side, looking as if it, too, shared in his master's sorrow for poor Lu, who had no power now to pat the head which it had bent forward for her customary caress. With pale face and quivering lips, young Wright held our torches while I transferred my sad burden to McClure, and gave him my overcoat to cover her. Supporting the rigid form in front of him with one arm, he turned his horse homeward, and dropping the rein, sustained with his right hand, the unfortunate girl's head upon his broad chest.

Observing the feeble condition of the young man, who was several years my junior, I prevailed upon him to mount my horse; and walking by his side, we followed for some moments in silence the retreating footsteps of McClure.

My companion was the first to speak. "I know," said he abruptly, "what you are thinking of. You condemn me, in your own mind, as a villain unfit to

live. Then why this kindness to me? You wear a pistol: why not use it upon me? God knows, I'm tired of life!"

"Don't talk in that way," I replied bluffly, "every man has his faults, and until my own skirts are clear, I wont undertake either to measure or punish the errors of others; but I confess I was thinking just then that if yonder poor girl could speak, she would attribute to you the paternity of that little Waif of the Wood, the child I found."

"Never!" he rejoined, emphatically.

I felt a pang of dissappointment, for I feared he was uttering a falsehood to cover his culpability.

"Never!" he repeated. "She was pledged to secrecy, but that was unnecessary. Such was her fidelity to me, that the Inquisition itself could not have wrung from her any admission injuring me. But I say to you that in the eyes of God she is my wife, and if that child is her's it is mine, as well."

"Tis an honest confession," said I, "and I like you the better for it. I suspected the truth, when I witnessed your distress. But what shall be done with our little Waifwood? so I call the child."

"Waifwood?" (he repeated the name a number of times, in an undertone.) You regard it as a foundling, then? It is well. Let it remain with the McClures. Possibly they may not dream it is her's, for so well did she conceal her situation, that even I did not suspect her time to be so near. Pure and ignorant of such things as she was, she may not have known it herself. For its own sake, and for the sake of her dear memory, I'd rather the child should'nt be known as her's."

"McClure and his wife cannot fail to suspect it," said I.

"You don't know them as well as I do," he rejoined. "They're so honest and simple-hearted, they won't think such a thing possible. Indeed, probably the idea will not occur to them at all. They would sooner suspect you, yourself."

"Good heavens, sir," I exclaimed, (with a heat that has made me laugh heartily many a time since,) you don't mean to imply that they'll take me to be the mother? (and of course the child must have had one!)"

Begging my pardon, in a tone I thought a little petulant, he relapsed into a moody silence, which continued until we reached the house. We found the old man awaiting us outside.

"I feel monsus bad, Major," said he, in a low tone, "about breakin' this matter to my woman. It 'll e'en about kill her, the poor soul! Cale Wright, you git off that hoss, an' go in, and tell it as easy 's if you was puncturin' yer own eye-ball. Be drefle car'ful, wont yer? She has a tender spot for this poor critter in her heart. It 'll be like techin' her on the raw. You can be smooth as ile, sometimes; be easy with her now. Go in and perpar' her fur this, a minute or so afore we go in."

The young man assented, and, dismounting, entered the house.

CHAPTER IV.

THE INDIAN.

"LEND me a hand, here, Major, will yer?" said McClure, with a faltering voice, and passed down to me the melancholy burden. Whether or not it was the warmth conveyed by the honest breast upon which it had been born, I could not tell, but as I took the hand of the poor girl in mine, my heart jumped within me, for I fancied it was less cold and rigid than before. Instinctively, my fingers sought her pulse, and I thought I detected a feeble beat or two! An exclamation of glad surprise escaped me. "What d'ye say?" demanded McClure, eagerly, as he alighted slowly from his horse—his knee feeling rather stiff just then. "As sure as I live, I believe she does!" I replied. The old man forgot his lameness, and in an instant was at my side.

"Lemme have her!" he cried, deeply excited, and taking the body in his arms, he bore it quietly into the cabin. "Don't take on, dame!" said he, as his wife, with horror in her looks, met him at the door; the Major thinks she aint dead; o'ny sort o' stunded by the lightnin'. Take the baby off the bunk, and I'll lay her thar."

"Dear me, dear me!" murmured the old lady; the

tears streaming down her cheeks, as she took up the unconscious infant and handed it to me, while her husband gently placed the young mother upon the bed, where Wright, with a countenance whose expression alternated between hope and fear, had already taken a position. His clasped hands, rigidly compressed mouth and straining eye-balls indicated that it was only by a painful effort of self-control that he could restrain himself so far as to play a subordinate part in the action of the scene. While my good host and hostess were applying such restoratives as they had at hand, my attention was attracted to the form of an Indian, lying supine upon the floor, with his feet to the fire. He was wrapped in a woollen blanket, nearly enveloping his head as well as body, and well-nigh concealing his face. It was not an uncommon sight in the cabins of the whites of the Cherokee country, at that period, and, I rightly conjectured that it was some copper-visaged straggler who had sought and obtained from the charitable dame, during our absence, permission to lodge there for the night. Bearing in mind, that the Indians have many remedies unknown to the whites, I suggested that he should be called upon.

"He's fast asleep," said the dame.

But I knew better, for his two glittering black eyes were, an instant before, fixed upon the little innocent in my arms. "Halloo!" said I, nudging him with my foot. A snore was the only response. He would have us think he was not awake. I applied the toe of my boot to him again: this time harder than before. With a grunt of displeasure, the red-skin opened his blanket and his eyes at the same moment. "Come,"

said I, "old fellow, turn out: we want your aid. Do something to pay for your lodging. Here is a young woman in need of your help; that is, if you have any skill in medicine." At this, the Indian arose and looking around upon us gravely uttered in the musical Cherokee language, the salutation,

"Osee se narla!"

He was a younger fellow than I had expected to see; not large, but sinewy; in height about the same as young Wright, whom, but for a copper color and other Indian peculiarities, he would have resembled. "Let Wakeelah see the maiden!" said he.

He walked to the bedside as he spoke, and would have touched the prostrate form, but the old man interposed, with a slight motion of his hand. "Ugh!" said the Indian, "she is good to look at—must be good to touch. Wakeelah's hands are not the lightning, to burn and kill! He will not hurt the maiden: he will do her good."

"Wall, do her good without techin' on her; can't ye?" said McClure, looking up testily from his occupation of chafing her temples with brandy.

"Wakeelah has a charm will cure her," replied the red-man, gravely. "Bring me pail water from the spring; then all go way, and leave me with the maiden. She shall be well."

"Git out; I won't do't!" responded the old man. "I disremembered it, but now it's come to me that water all over a person struck with lightnin' 'll do a heap o' good; but you shant apply it. It's wimmin's work in this case. In two minutes, dame, I'll have a good fire in tother room, and nen we'll take her in

thar and you shall try the 'fect o' water. You Injun, you, take that bucket thar, and fill it at the spring, jist beyond the barn: and, Major, you hand that young 'un to Cale here: he don't 'pear to be doin' nuffin: and nen go out, will yer, and put up our hosses?"

These requests were complied with promptly, though I detected an ugly scowl pass, like a black cloud, over the sinister countenance of Wakeelah (as he called himself,) on his way to the door. When we were both outside, however, he had apparently become better-natured, for he offered to take care of my horse for me, and, before I could stop him, vaulted lightly into the saddle, and, followed by the docile nag of mine host, trotted off to the barn. Intent upon filling the bucket which the rascal had dropped upon the ground, I let him have his way; thinking that I would go myself presently and make sure he had done it well, and that Jack was comfortably bestowed. If I had not been so full of the matter now absorbing the attention of the inmates of the house, I should have hesitated at trusting my valuable animal to such a person, even for so short a time; for horse-stealing had of late, become too common in that part of the country: indeed, it was generally believed, that an organized band of horse-thieves and counterfeiters, belonging to the lower counties of Georgia, were extending their operations, to the Cherokee section. The captain, or leader of these scoundrels, a desperado named Murrell, it was said, had a cross of Indian blood in his veins, and had some confederates among the Cherokees. Whether that was so, or not, I could not say, but I knew that an Indian's view of property in horses was very like the

white men's loose regard for meum and tuum in the matter of umbrellas, and it should have taught me not to trust to my impromptu groom in the deer-skin leg-gins. However, trust him I did, for the nonce, and getting a pail-full of cold spring water, hurried into the house, where, in an inner room, I found my stalwart host piling pitch pine knots on the fire, which he had already kindled with such success, that it illuminated the apartment so entirely as to render other light superfluous. It was the guest's room, and contained (besides a chair and an engraved portrait of George Washington,) a bed, upon which we now placed poor Lu, whose appearance had undergone in a short time a slight yet obvious improvement. We now left the old lady alone with her, to bathe and rub the skin briskly, and cover her up warm. In the meantime, the Indian returned from his care of the horses, and merely remarking, with a grunt, that "Wakeelah was much sleepy," wrapped himself in his blanket and resumed the position in which I had found him on the floor. He was a bright, intelligent fellow, evidently; and, though he abstained from conversation with us, he looked as if, at a council fire, he could talk fluently enough. No weapon was visible upon his person; and if there had been it would have made little difference in our estimate of his harmlessness; such was the contempt universally entertained in that quarter for the courage of the Cherokees. I know, that Wright, senior, and other influential men owning land in the Cherokee county, actuated by mercenary motives, had not ceased, for years, to urge upon Congress, and the administration of Gen. Jackson, that the miserable

remnant of the tribe was formidable and dangerous, and ought to be removed; but never was there a misrepresentation more gross and inexcusable. 'There are black sheep in every flock,' according to the old adage, and there were undoubtedly some ugly specimens among the Cherokees, but the worst of them were as good as the unscrupulous white men, who subsequently effected their removal to Arkansas.

In a few moments after he had lain down—his bronze features concealed by his blanket—we heard the hard breathing of Wakeelah, as if sound asleep. In the meantime we awaited with anxiety the result of the dame's efforts for the restoration of Lu. It seemed an age, but really it was not long before the good old lady popped in her radiant face and bade us come and see. With a cry of joy, Cale ran into the room where the patient was, and we, following, found him at the bedside, bending over and calling her, by the most endearing epithets, to recognize him. McClure was in too grateful a mood to be angry with him.

"Her eyes are fixed upon you, but she don't know you: she don't know anybody, now, I'm thinkin'. Has she spoke yet, wife?"

"No; she has moved her lips two or three times, and tried to raise one of her hands to her head, poor, dear thing! but I haint heern a word from her, on'y a deep sigh once in a while as if she was gaspin' for a good long breath."

As the stricken woman lay upon the bed, covered with the counterpane of many colors—the handiwork of the dame's early days—it was curious to witness in her countenance the faint struggle of the vital forces to

overcome the paralyzing effect of the electric fluid with which her system was still surcharged. We all watched her with the most intense interest: I scarcely less than the others, stranger though I was. Presently the pulse, feeble and intermittent when we entered the room, beat more perceptibly, and a faint red grew visible through her olive complexion and glowed in her well-formed lips. Her soft jet-black hair, arched-brows, fringing eye-lashes, and symmetrical neck, added, perhaps to the interest which I felt in the handsome quadroon; for unjust though it is, human sympathy oftener flows for distressed beauty than for the unattractive wretched, however strong their claims.

Lu's recovery seemed hopeful, if not certain, but still she uttered no word, and her large, dark eyes looked dusky and vacant. So she continued until the little hours of the new day.

At McClure's suggestion, Wright and I left the apartment in order that his wife might obtain a little needful sleep, upon the same bed with Lu, while he remained as a watcher. At daylight, should it appear desirable to procure the aid of a physician, Wright was to ride for one to the nearest village, which was five miles distant.

As we entered the kitchen, where the little Waifwood lay slumbering, I observed that the Indian had taken advantage of our temporary absence, and with all the nonchalance in the world, ensconced himself by her side, where, no longer shrouded in his blanket, he too reposed, apparently fast asleep. It was a striking contrast, that picture of the two countenances side by side, one fair as a cherub, the other swarthy, rough and

sinister—not an old nor a very bad-featured face, but prematurely marked with the lines that evil thoughts and gross indulgences produce. To use a trite phrase it was a scene for an artist. However, Wright abruptly ended it by summarily and indignantly “yanking” the sleeping savage from the bed to the floor. With a scowl expressive of the most thorough antipathy, Wakeelah arose and for a moment confronted the disturber of his slumbers as if to retaliate.

Of the same height and size, maugre the entire difference in complexion and general appearance of the two, there was, as we have before intimated, a degree of resemblance between these men, which made a singular impression upon me, as, for a moment they faced each other. In an instant, however, the pluck of the Cherokee seemed to desert him, for turning away abruptly, he raised his blanket from the floor where it had fallen, and again wrapping himself in its folds, resumed his place near the hearth as coolly as if he had been born and “raised” there. Nor did Wright appear to give the fellow any further thought, for taking a seat upon the trundle bed, without disturbing the unconscious infant, he beckoned me to sit down beside him, and when I had complied, began to talk to me freely, (as young men will, sometimes, to those to whom they have taken a liking,) about his past history, with especial reference to his present situation.

CHAPTER V.

WAIFWOOD'S MOTHER.

I WILL not attempt to give the language of Cale, verbatim: it was not invariably grammatical, and once in a while he gave to the pronunciation of his words the usual plantation peculiarity, as bar for bear and thar for there, but it was so much better than was common in that region, that I gave him some credit for having improved his limited opportunities. In the absence of any public school system, or private academies there, his mother had let him go daily to the residence of a neighbor, two miles distant; one Mr. Morlis, whose two sons were imbibing large doses of learning per diem, (with about as good a grace as they would have taken so much calomel and jalap) from a gentleman of Cape Cod extraction, who had studied for the pulpit but come South for an atmosphere more congenial to weak lungs. This tutor—the Rev. Mr. Perrin, he liked to be called—more successful in teaching him than the others, the common rudiments and a little Latin and belles-lettres, had taken quite a liking to young Wright, and for that reason taught him, con amore, many things not mentioned in his prospectus. Perrin was not a very clerical person, though a good theologian: and though pretty well read, his diction

was not unexceptionable, particularly when surrounded only by those with whom he could be very familiar. His expletives were decidedly unparsonlike, and his aversion to etiquette amounted to affectation: yet, at heart, he was a true man, humane as well as generous; and nothing, next to reading an English review, or catching a parcel of trout, (and eating them) afforded him more pleasure than to speak comforting words to some poor creature, suffering from mental or physical affliction: and it mattered not a whit to him whether the recipient of his consolatory efforts were white or black. One object of interest to the eccentric tutor was the bright-eyed, vivacious little ten-year old yellow-girl, whom Mr. Morlis, her master, had told to do his errands. He was not long in satisfying himself that the owner of this child was also her father. This he was convinced of for several reasons, not the strongest of which was the indulgence and fondness of Mr. Morlis for the young one, and his lenient bearing towards the mother whenever the latter was reported to him by his overseer for remissness in her service. Naturally quick-witted and smart, the partiality of her master led the little one to have pretty much her own way in the house, until the return of the two misses Morlis from their boarding-school near Philadelphia, suddenly changed the unruffled tenor of her opening career. These damsels were wilful themselves and not at all inclined to humor the many whims of the capricious little Lu (that was her name;) so she got more cuffs than caresses at their hands, and, rebelling against this treatment, kept herself in hot water pretty much all the time; very much to the regret of Mr. Morlis,

especially as owing to his deference to those of whom he was himself in some sort a slave, he was powerless to remedy the difficulty. In this overclouded aspect of her youthful sky, Lu would often pour forth her sorrows to good Mr. Perrin, who would comfort her as well as he could, and usually conclude by patting her on the head, and saying, that the Misses would soon be married off and leave home. Then, he contrived to divert her attention and keep her out of their way, by teaching her, with the approbation of Mr. Morlis, first the rudiments, and next some more advanced studies. Possessing a quick apprehension and retentive memory, little Lu soon became a good learner, and as she had the advantage of this friendly tuition during a series of years, she surpassed at length her more privileged half-sisters, who, by the way, felt anything but kindly towards the tutor, in consequence.

It was while she was yet in her first lessons, that Cale Wright began his tuition under the same teacher, and though he rarely met her in Mr. Perrin's study, that gentleman's praises of her proficiency gave him a good opinion of Lu's intellect. Her mother dying about that time, the poor girl was very sad, but "after all," she said, "it was not much worse than to have her taken to Louisiana and sold, as the sisters had repeatedly threatened should be done, if she didn't mind better."

If the young ladies felt any sorrow at the decease of her mother beyond mere regret for the loss of a valuable slave, it was ephemeral and soon passed away; still, for a long time afterwards, whenever the natural gayety of Lu's disposition broke through the clouds.

into a sunshiny smile, in their presence, they would severely rebuke her levity and tell her it was indecent so soon to forget the dead.

This harshness increased with Lu's education, and as their father's love for her, grew with her mental acquisitions, their dislike intensified until it became confirmed into hatred. In innumerable ways, as they had opportunity, (and of course that was ample, especially when Mr. Morlis was absent,) these un-amiable young ladies vented their petty malice at the poor girl's expense; to the constant annoyance of the honest dominie, Mr. Perrin, who worked himself into a condition of chronic irritation on the subject—the more wearing because obliged to keep it to himself.

Lu's high spirit, unfitted for her sphere by a knowledge of her paternity, and still more by the indulgence to which she had been accustomed, chafed sorely and refused submission to this untoward change in her situation. At length, things came to so bad a pass, that she was ordered by her mistress to prepare herself for a whipping. She had not been subjected to any such punishment since she was old enough to know right from wrong; and now she was thirteen, and felt almost a woman. She would have appealed to Mr. Morlis, but he was quite ill, and she was denied admission to his room. Maddened and desperate, she ran to the creek and jumped in; but was rescued by young Wright from the fate she coveted. Her attempt at suicide became known to Mr. Morlis, and his family besought him to sell her. Aware that his end was nigh at hand, the sick man determined to place his illegitimate daughter, before he died, in other and bet-

ter keeping than that of his own family, where he was conscious she would always be the occasion of strife if she remained. Calling the dominie to his bedside, during the still watches of the night, he communicated to his willing ear, when Perrin was alone with him, the matter which most exercised his mind, and professed a sincere desire to give the child her freedom; but what would she do if at liberty? what would become of her, inexperienced as she was? It seemed to him that it would be better to make a nominal sale of her to some good and responsible friend, who should take her into the service of his family and retain her until she should attain the age of eighteen, when, if she preferred to do so, she should receive her freedom papers and be sent to Philadelphia.

He thought he might depend upon his neighbor, Squire Wright, to do as much for him. What thought Mr. Perrin? The reverend tutor opined, that it would be better to emancipate Lu at once, and send her, without further delay, into a free State, where beyond a doubt she could obtain a respectable livelihood and ultimately perhaps, a suitable husband. "No, no, no!" rejoined the sick man, with tremulous earnestness, "without friends, without guardians, how long would her impressible nature, so impulsive, too—withstand the temptations which (none know better than I who have sinned so deeply myself,) would be cast in her way by the libertines of the cities? I cannot set poor Lu adrift, yet. Better by far that she should live and die, in this back country, in the care of a humane, even-handed master: but I confess this matter troubles me: God knows it does!"

His lips quivered as he spoke, and covering his face with his hands, he breathed an inaudible prayer. After a silence of a few minutes, (during which he took some medicine at the hands of the dominie,) he resumed the subject, and the result was that on the following day his wealthy neighbor Wright was called in, confidentially, and, after a long talk to which Perrin was the only witness, Morlis gave him a bill of sale of Lu for the nominal consideration of one hundred dollars. "The girl's services," said Morlis, "will be worth that to you, many times over, between this and the time she is eighteen, when according to the solemn pledge which you have just made to me, my old friend, you will give her, her freedom papers, should she elect to receive them."

Squire Wright laid his hand upon his heart and bowed. In the meantime, continued the sick man, now quite exhausted, "say nothing about the terms of this sale, and keep to yourself all that we have said about it. Be kind to her, my dear sir, I beseech you! God knows I feel anxious about her welfare."

Wright assented drily, "that it was natural he should: he had always liked the girl, and would treat her so well that he reckoned she would be quite contented in her new home."

Before a fortnight had elapsed after this interview, Mr. Morlis died, and Lu was transferred to the residence of the Wrights—not sorry at the exchange perhaps, yet humiliated and unhappy.

Well content with his bargain, her new master smiled upon her blandly; nor was her "strong-minded" mistress less kind; but it was the dominie's favorite, Cale, whose bearing was most medicinal to her bruised

spirit. To him, under an injunction of secrecy, the sympathizing Perrin communicated the terms upon which she had come into his father's possession. Already imbued by his well-meaning preceptor with a sense of Lu's superiority to other slaves, and a righteous indignation against the peculiar injustice and hardship of her lot, young Wright readily entered into a generous and genial appreciation of her trials, and evinced, in innumerable ways, so much consideration for her feelings, that he seemed to her as good as a brother; perhaps better. The effect of all these amenities was to remove the cloud from Lu's brow; and she became not merely resigned, but (when Cale was present,) entirely happy. He had quite a constructive talent, and might have become eminent as a machinist or builder, if his work had not been discouraged by that conventional sentiment, which, in the slave States, throws an odium on white labor. There were only two of his friends who appreciated his ingenuity and stimulated it with hearty praise. These were the dominie and poor Lu.

Perrin was indignant at the sneers of the misses Morris and others, at the lad's, "low mechanic notions" as they called it, and more than once he had so expressed himself in the presence of the young ladies, and eloquently vindicated the dignity of labor. "The work," he said, "which manufactures skill in mechanical art, is God-given; it is genius."

This encouraged Cale; but what was a more constant stimulus was the presence and praise of Lu. She was never tired of admiring his miniature saw-mills and sail-boats and improved churns.

As he narrated this story to me, he interlarded it with many reminiscences of his boyish achievements, and adventures, in some of which Lu had shared.

At length, the damsel attained her eighteenth year, and Cale's father announced his intention of sending her to Philadelphia. It was totally unexpected by her, and distressed her exceedingly. It was scarcely less painful to the young man, and the prospect of parting with her, perhaps forever, intensified the warm regard which he had for her into the more fervent feeling of love. It needed only his passionate avowal of this sentiment to kindle into flame the love for him which was smouldering in the pent-up bosom of poor Lu. In that hour of softness and unreasoning ecstasy, virtue and discretion succumbed, and both fell impulsively—almost involuntarily—into the snare of the tempter. It was a grave fault, speedily repented. No longer innocent, the unfortunate girl—herself the offspring of a like sin—fled from the presence of her lover, and shunned his presence like a guilty thing. Cale appreciated her feelings, measuring them by his own remorse, and bitterly upbraided himself for the advantage which he had taken of her confiding love. That night, “he turned, and turned, and found no rest.” In vain, he cried, in the bitterness of his sorrow, upon God to show him what he should do: the morning came to his sleepless bed and found him undecided. Yet something he must and would do to give peace to the poor girl whom he had wronged. It was her alone he cared for: the world around would not condemn, (for was she not a slave?) but she was wretched, and he the cause; that was enough. Both conscience and

affection were earnest and untiring pleaders in her behalf. They would allow him no peace until he had done what he could to make honorable amends. "She is going to Philadelphia: I will go with her. Then I'll marry her. It would disgrace me, here, but there we can live in peace; and if I can get something to do, we shall be quite happy." Oh, how he longed for a friend to whom he could confide the secret and obtain counsel! After some hesitancy, he made a clean breast of it to Mr. Perrin, and expressed his purpose of making Lu his legal wife, if she would consent to it. The good man who had been very grave at the confession of his sin, brightened up as Cale pronounced his resolve to make a reparation so ample. "Do it, my dear boy!" he cried, grasping his hand and shaking it vigorously, "You will lose some friends by it, but you will gain God, in whose favor all blessings are comprehended, and you will secure the happiness of my dear little protege, who is handsome enough and good enough, mangre her unfortunate birth, to be the wife of any man on God's footstool—in these parts."

Cale longed for the time to come when he could consummate his purpose, for until then neither he nor Lu could know any peace. Something he feared would happen to prevent it; and with a tremulous anxiety to "have it over with," he suggested that perhaps a private marriage, immediately, would be better than to wait.

The dominie replied that he would take the matter into consideration and give him the result of his deliberations on the morrow.

On the following day, Perrin started for Wright's

residence soon after breakfast, and on his way through a wood, surprised Lu sitting under a tree, weeping. Dismounting from the mule he rode, the worthy man approached his favorite and told her to dry her eyes for he had found a husband for her, and she must look her prettiest.

He had scarcely uttered this remark, when Cale (who had come out to meet him on the way) appeared at a little distance, and, as soon as he saw them, hastened to join them.

Lu would have still avoided her lover, but with gentle force, he drew her to him, and, as her heaving bosom beat tumultuously against his own, entreated her to become his wife. She shook her head sadly, and hid her face upon his shoulder; murmuring as she did so, "It is impossible; I am only a poor slave!"

Then Perrin communicated to her the secret, to which, hitherto she had been a stranger, viz: her father's solicitude for her before he died, and the arrangement which he had made for her freedom, the time for which was now arrived. Then Lu cried again, but with joy; which subsided into happy contemplation of the picture which Cale drew as he developed to her his plan of the life they would lead in the North.

The course they would pursue for the present, was then discussed, and at its conclusion, Parson Perrin joined their hands, and with no witness but God and the countless little birds which were singing gaily in the huge trees of the forest, pronounced the brief marriage ceremony of the Unitarian church.

Weeks and months passed, and still Cale and Lu

continued at his father's house. Unaccountably, the old man had not resumed the subject of sending her to Philadelphia. The fact was, without suspecting his son's secret, the elder Wright feared that he was strongly inclined to go forth into the world and seek his fortune elsewhere than on the paternal acres—a project upon which Cale's mother had put her imperious foot the very first time that her son suggested it, but which his father suspected he still harbored, notwithstanding the maternal veto.

"Stay at home Cale," he would say; "take my advice and stay at home. Rolling stones gather no moss. D'ye disremember the parable o' the prodigal son? That ere foolish feller was a heap like you in one thing, jist so onsteady. I reckon he, too, went to the Big Norrud, follerin' strange inventings. Don't bother your head about sitch machines. Be a planter—the noblest work of God—as the good book says, and if yer want preferment, take holt o' politics, and go to the legislatur' as I done. 'Fore you die, praps you'll be in Congress. I jist done got a speech from John C. Calhoun's own hand agin that monster, the Tariff, and one from Gen. Habersham, I want yer to read to me. I reckon our Southern statesmen beat the world. These ere are powerful excitin' times in politics. South Car'lina 'll cut loose from the Union, I reckon; and Georgia, too, praps; spite of old Ginral Jackson's teeth. Then there'll be a chance for yer to make yer mark boy in politics, and show what Perrin's larnin' has done for ye. 'Nuther thing, I want ye to cotton up to one o' the Morlis gals. They're eddicated, peert and good lookin', and the widder's plantation jines my three

hundred-and-twenty acre lot, tother side the creek. I reckon if you'd marry one o' the gals (don't marter much which,) the widder'd heave in as much more; and then you'd have risin' six hundred acre pretty good cotton land to start life with."

"I have no field hands," said his son to him, once, when he was talking in this strain, and he lacked for anything better to say.

"Morlis left each of his gals a number," rejoined his father, and I spose I could spar' ye eight or ten hands from our gang, if your mother's willing; and possibly (I wont say sartin, mind,) I could let ye have that gal, Lu, for a house-servant, or to tend your childern."

It was with some difficulty that Cale could restrain himself from saying that Lu was not his to give, but he bit his lips and held his tongue, resolved, of course, to circumvent his father's purpose of retaining a property in her, but in the meantime to be cautious how he proceeded in the matter. Feeling the need of good counsel, he repaired, as before, to Mr. Perrin, and was advised by him to leave with Lu for the North, as soon as he could arrange to do so, independently of his parents' aid or knowledge. Unfortunately for the immediate execution of this enterprise, Cale had no money, and though Perrin generously offered him all his own little savings, the sum was too small for the purpose: so there was no recourse but to wait awhile.

Faithful to her purpose of interesting her son in one or the other of the girls, Mrs. Wright was suddenly taken with a prodigious fondness for the society of widow Morlis and her daughters, and got Cale to ac-

company her in the frequent visits which she made to them. In return, they were often invited to her house, and when they came, the fat cook had to do her best in the preparation of niceties, and Lu's work was doubled in her department of waiting upon these, the first and only enemies she had in the world.

Then there were riding and fishing excursions, planned by the managing woman, with the warm approval of her husband; and occasionally a picnic; in all of which diversions, it was contrived by the wire-pullers, to have their son play the gallant to the young ladies. In this manner, time so pregnant with fate to one poor creature, glided along pleasantly enough with them. Lu had but little communication with her husband, (for he had so many eyes upon him that he thought it necessary to avoid all intercourse with her,) and she began to distrust his fidelity to her. Contrasting her sallow complexion and menial condition with the fairer faces and prosperous lot of the misses Morlis, she grew sick at heart and abandoned herself to melancholy. What, too, was to become of the child which she was to bear to him? "Better," she said to Cale, one night, when she had stolen to his room, (as oft she did when the rest were sleeping,) to unburden her aching heart to him, "far better that I, and it, should sink beneath the waters of the creek, and then we shall trouble you no more!" Then he would speak soothing words, and say, what was true enough, that it was policy which impelled him to play his part in the entertainment of the Morlis ladies. It would facilitate his procurement of the means to fly with her, to a refuge where they might live happily together;

never more to be divided as long as life should last. This was some comfort, but, when repeated from time to time, lost at last its efficacy, and the poor girl sank into despair. It had been her custom to pass a little time, almost daily, at McClure's, for there she was treated with almost parental kindness; and when, after a threat to Cale that she was going to the woods, never more to return, a day or two passed without his seeing her, he inferred that she was safely housed beneath their hospitable though humble roof; and he obtained leave from his mother for her to remain a week.

But when that time had passed without her return, and one of the field hands said that Major McClure had inquired of him that day, how Lu was, Cale became very uneasy, and, as a furious storm arose, he asked himself, "Can it be that she was true to her threat, and is now in the woods, exposed to this ruthless weather?" The idea filled him with remorse; and his heart throbbed with anxiety. "I cannot bear this terrible suspense," was his next thought, "I must face the storm, and go to McClure's to learn the truth. Likely she is there. Perhaps she has been there all the while, notwithstanding what Sam said. At any rate, this storm must have led her to seek shelter either there or in some friendly cabin."

His mother, in a towering passion, had expressed her purpose of sending out the overseer and Jake Ward, in quest of her, the first thing, next morning; but Cale would not wait for their aid. Without communicating his intention, he left the house quietly; too much agitated in mind to heed the rain, which was

beating down through the dense darkness, as if it would wash away every vestige of the road over which he must pass. He arrived, at length, at McClure's, and with a wildly-beating heart, entered only to find his fears confirmed.

CHAPTER VI.

THE KIDNAPPER.

WHEN young Wright had ended the foregoing account of himself, and his secret relation to Lu, he enjoined upon me to regard it, for the present, as confidential. He then left me, to catch a little sleep; promising to see me again in a few hours.

I followed him into the open air, and bade him good night. It was clear star-light, but nearly morning. As I turned towards the house again, I fancied I saw the swarthy head of the Indian popped out at the portal and as quickly withdrawn. When I entered the cabin, which I did immediately, Wakeelah lay in the position in which we had left him, as sound asleep, apparently, as ever. I was satisfied, afterwards, that the knave was awake all the while, and in all probability had heard the most of Cale's narration. However, at the time, I had only a brief suspicion, and contented myself by watching his prostrate figure for a few moments after I had lain down upon the low bed in the corner. The light in the room had become dusky; for the fire was nearly out; and too tired and sleepy to keep my eyes open long, I soon fell into a drowse. How long I had slept I cannot say, but probably not over an hour, when my slumber became light

and assumed the character of nightmare. Methought I saw Wakeelah bending over me, with the same sinister face, but no longer in the garb of the Cherokee. In one hand he held a Bowie knife, while the other threatened my throat. I essayed to spring up; to stay his hand; to utter a cry; but in vain: I was deprived, as by a mysterious spell, of the power either to move or make myself heard. Then, I thought, the villain left me and walked cautiously to the door of the inner room, and, after a careful view, disappeared within. Presently, methought, he came out hastily, bearing in his arms the sleeping child, and seizing his blanket which lay upon the hearth, enveloped little Waif of the Wood in it, and stole like a thief from the house! What would I not have given at that moment for the free use of my legs and my good right arm. My desperate effort to shout an alarm, at length partially unlocked my tongue, and though still unable to articulate a word, I believe I "hollered like a loon," for the noise I made brought to my side my host, (who had fallen asleep on his watch, at the fireside in the other room,) and, with a rough hand on my shoulder, he awoke me.

So vividly did the impression received in my trance remain upon my mind, that my first look was at the spot where the Indian had lain. He was gone.

"What's got the child?" cried out the dame, from the chamber where she had had the little one in the same bed with her and Lu.—"You got it, Joe?"

I thought I heard horses' hoofs, at the moment and a terrible thought flashed upon me. I was at the cabin door in an instant. A few rods away down the

road, I saw the treacherous Wakeelah mounted on my precious steed, and bearing upon one arm a burden, which, I doubted not, was the little darling I had saved only to lose so soon !

"That devil has stolen the child !" I cried.

"And your hoss !" said McClure, who now stood at my side in the door-way. "Gimme my rifle !" and he stepped back into the cabin.

It was just the peep of day, and there was light enough to reveal a grin of triumph on the robber's face, as, attracted by my cry, he turned his head and, without slackening his speed, looked back at us.

In a moment, the old man came out, bearing his shooting-iron, and followed to the door-sill by his astounded helpmeet in her night gown. She was too much excited to think of dress.

"Mind how you shoot, my good sir !" cried I, seeing him level his rifle and take aim.

"I'll be keerful, Major," he replied.

"He has the baby in front of him," I added.

"Do be keerful, Joe !" said his wife.

At that instant, crack went the rifle.

"Yer spile't my aim, Major !" exclaimed McClure, "with what yer said about the child ; but I allow I drawn blood any how, for see his hand at his ear ! Oh, if I'd on'y got another load, now !"

The ruffian had reeled in his saddle, but kept on.

"I'll take your horse and follow him !" said I ; and ran to the stable. Sad was the sight I saw, there. It was McClure's faithful old hunter, weltering in his own blood ! The treacherous guest had hamstrung him, in order, doubtless, that he might not aid us in a

pursuit. As I rushed out to inform the old man, I found him re-loading; but the fugitive had disappeared around a bend in the road. The dame, in the doorway, looked the embodiment of blank despair.

“Good God!” cried I, “Shall he escape us? The dastardly wretch has hamstrung your horse, and we have no means of following him!”

“Hamstrung my hoss?” cried McClure, in consternation: “ye don’t say!” and he started in a hurry for the barn.

“Oh, lard, lard, lard!” almost shrieked my worthy hostess; “poor Billy, poor Billy!” and with many a piteous repetition of their favorite animal’s name, she started immediately to follow her old man; but, suddenly recollecting herself, turned abruptly and re-entered the house.

My own impulse was to pursue the robber, on foot, in the desperate hope of keeping track of him, and obtaining some clue to his destination, but a second thought satisfied me that the effort would be worse than useless. No one, alas! knew better than I, how swift a nag he rode, and it was not at all likely that the rascal rider would slacken his pace until he had put miles between us. My beautiful horse, my tried friend, my gentle Jack! was I never to see him again? And thou, too, sweet morsel of humanity, my pretty Waifwood! what was to become of thee? Oh, how I wished that I had Wakeelah, there and then, within my grasp! And at the thought, my fingers clutched the air with nervous energy, as if the villain’s throat were there.

What was to be done? The nearest residence of

any account, as I had heard, was Wright's, three miles away; a long distance to go for help in a case like mine; but there was no alternative. Cale, of course, would be as eager as myself to raise a company to scour the country around in quest of the fugitive thief, and, I doubted not, his father, and other neighbors, would be willing to give the pursuit all reasonable aid; for as I have before intimated, the depredations of horse-thieves had become so serious in Georgia, that the planters were anxious to execute summary justice upon them with their own hands.

But first, I must let McClure know my purpose. I found him in the stable, binding up the gaping wounds in the legs of the poor brute, which prostrate upon its side, was regarding him with the piteous look with which dumb beasts, when sorely hurt, appeal to our feelings more eloquently than any human being can, be his sufferings never so bad.

McClure alternately vented his tender sympathy for the poor creature in the most loving terms, and iterated imprecations upon the head of the unfeeling miscreant who had done this deed.

He warmly approved my purpose, and directed me how to find Wright's house.

"I would' go wi' yer, Major," said he, "but how kin I desert this yere poor critter? Look ye, how his eyes plead wi' me not to leave him! God forgive me, but d'ye know, Major, I think that poor dumb critter 's got a soul? See how he licks my hand! Oh, my poor Billy, my poor Billy! Good nag, good nag!" Then dashing a tear from his eye, he added

sternly. "May God smite the heart of him that's done this yere butchery upon ye!"

I felt sorry for both the horse and his master; but had no time to indulge my sympathy, and after a brief inquiry into the sick woman's condition, (which I found still improving,) I hurried off to Wright's.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PURSUIT.

SWOLLEN by the rain of the previous night, the narrow creek was rushing on—a turbid, angry torrent, chafing like an untamed steed; and before I could cross, the girth of the frail bridge, which saddled it, gave way, and was swept down the current. Then I was in “a pretty fix,” and I fear the expletive I uttered was neither “brave, polite nor wise,” as our copy-slips used to say. There was no bridge, now, within two miles, and before I could reach the nearest, it too, might have shared the fate of the other. In vain I looked up and down the bank in quest of a skiff, canoe, or dug-out, (a boat made from the hollow trunk of a tree;) there was not so much as a brace of planks to make a raft of; but cross I must, if I would accomplish anything, and cross I determined I would.

If I were only on the back of my lost steed, (bad luck to the rascal who had usurped my seat!) how quickly would he carry me to the farther bank; for he had forded many a stream with me; some of them as rough as this. Now, there was no recourse for me but to plunge in, as Cassius did, when Cæsar dared him at the shore of angry Tiber—a contest worthy by the way, of imitation by our modern duelists.

Unlike the Roman swimmers however, I did not plunge in, "accoutred as I was:" I thought too much of the comfort of dry clothing when I should reach the the other side: so divesting myself of my garments, I secured them in a parcel to my head, entered the creek, and striking out manfully, in two or three minutes attained the further bank, four or five rods below the point from which I had started. Resuming my apparel hastily, I ran up to the bridge road, and pushed forward to Wright's plantation, as rapidly as I could over a route so muddy and full of gullies.

The great artist the sun, was just peeping from his door in the eastern horizon, and gilding with his golden glances the shocks of yellow corn standing in the immense field through which my route lay; the atmosphere purified by the late storm, was like nectar to the taste; and the healthy glow, produced by my swim, so added to my strength, that, despite the roughness of the way, I should have enjoyed it, maugre the untoward circumstances; and did, perhaps, for I was buoyant at that period of my life, though "a sadder if not a wiser man," now.

Presently, I came to groups of small log cabins, with a little patch of cultivated ground to each, and here and there a negro emerging from the door with a mouth wide open either with laughter or a yawn. A spiral column of smoke from each mud chimney (they were all built upon the outside of the houses,) was a sign that the morning meal was already preparing. Further on, I met young Wright, who unable to restrain his impatience, had started from his home to return to McClure's cabin.

"Gracious powers!" he exclaimed, when he recognized me a little way off, "what has happened?" He came up to me as he spoke, looking quite pale, and took my hand. "Is she dead?" he gasped.

I told him to rejoice, for Lu was better; at which he thanked God, and begged to know what had occurred to send me forth so early, and afoot. I answered him with the facts, and it was curious to observe in his ingenuous countenance, the different emotions which my statement inspired.

"Can we raise a posse to follow the villain and hunt him down?" was my inquiry, when my relation was ended. "Talk quick," I added, perceiving that he hesitated to reply, "we have not a moment to spare."

"I confess," said he, "that I am embarrassed and undecided what to advise. If we call others to our aid, it will lead, I'm afraid, to the discovery of our secret, and that would ruin me and Lu."

"I see," said I, "Your point. Have you a good horse, sure-footed and fast?"

"There are two in the stable," he replied.

"That will do," said I. "Saddle them as speedily as possible, and together we will hunt up the robber."

"Agreed," he replied, "if he's above ground we'll find him!"

"I'm not so certain of that," I rejoined; "the heart of this Cherokee country abounds in hiding places and fastnesses. I have already sent to the War Department a communication in regard to them, with a view to the use that might be made of them by the Indians in case they should resist the proposed expul-

sion: and my information was based upon personal knowledge lately gained of the localities."

"That knowledge will help you in this emergency," said Cale. "I'll get Sam to saddle the horses. That's our house yonder; will you come in?"

"Thank you, no; it would only delay us, and I have lost too much time already. Are your horses used to the creek? We shall have to ford it: the flood has carried away the bridge."

"I feared it," said he, when I crossed it, coming home; it shook so. How did you get over, sir?"

"Stripped to the buff, and swum it!" I replied.

"Is it possible?" said he, surprised. "Well, then I will risk the horses."

He went away, and in a few minutes came again, riding a sorrel, and leading a fine young black Morgan, I immediately mounted and we rode off at a brisk trot.

"I've left word with our stable-boy, Sam, which will account for this move, to my mother and father. They'll think that I've gone with a friend and Major McClure, on a hunt after Lu."

We reached the creek, shortly, and urged our steeds into the water. It was so swift and noisy, that they were loth to enter, but with a smart blow from my open hand upon the flank of the animal I rode, I impelled him forward; and, Cale imitating my example, our beasts carried us over in safety.

On arriving at McClure's, we found the dame, with a sad countenance preparing breakfast. Cale's first inquiry was after Lu. "Oh, she was much better," the hostess said. In a few moments, her husband came in from the barn, and gave us an account of the present

condition of poor Billy. Then we sat down at the good woman's table to swallow hastily a few mouth-fuls before starting: she meantime cramming my saddle-bags with "lunches for six."

"Haint Lu said nothin', yet, wife?" inquired the old man, who had no appetite to eat.

"Not a word out of her mouth;" she replied "but he can sit up; though she looks kind o' wild."

As she spoke, a wan, ghost-like creature, clad all in white, glided into the room, and sat in the chair which had been placed for our host at the table. It was Lu, herself. 'I do not know that I was ever uncommonly nervous, but I felt then, that I turned pale. Cale was as white as a sheet.

"Good God!" he ejaculated in a low tone, as if to himself, "how changed!"

I could not recognize any alteration, as I had not seen her before the previous night, but there was in her vacant eyes and general expression, something so strange and unnatural, that I could easily conceive that a most extraordinary change had occurred in her appearance, since they had seen her well and in her right mind.

Without heeding us, she began to eat with avidity, and took a long draught of the cold spring water. "My dear Lu," said Cale, regarding her tenderly, "don't you know me?" She made no reply, but continued her repast—the first, perhaps, that she had had for—we did not know how long. "Lu, child!" cried the dame, raising her voice, "Cale Wright is speaking to ye!" Still there was no response either by word or look. The old man rose, then, from the

chimney corner, where he was sitting, and laying his hand gently upon the unfortunate girl's shoulder repeated her name. She turned her face up to his, in response to his touch, but so expressionless was her look, that McClure exclaimed involuntarily, "She don't know me; her mind is clean gone, clean gone!"

As he spoke, she arose and glided away as noiselessly as she had come. All eyes followed her retiring form.

"She is harmless, though, poor thing!" sighed the dame, and went into the apartment to which Lu had retreated.

"Wife," said McClure, "won't yer see if she don't want suthin' more to eat! I'm afeerd I scar'd her away."

Poor Cale—I pitied him—rose from the table, and with quivering lips begged the old man to take good care of her until his return.

"Of course I shall; and as long as I live, if need be, youngster!" replied my host, "for d'ye see, thar's no livin' bein', I'm thinkin', that loves that yere poor gal better'n I do." Cale squeezed the old man's hand, and I think a tear dropped upon it, as he murmured, "God bless you!"

Then we mounted our horses, and rode quickly away, over the road taken by Wakeelah: the same by which I had come, the night previous.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SLAVE-CATCHER.

OUR ride was not marked by anything of interest until we came to the prostrate Titan of the forest, at the base of which Lu had received a portion of the electric shock. After examining it a moment, we passed on as well as we could over a path obstructed by fragments of trees.

"At the next cabin, we can get a blood-hound that'll track the robber to the world's end, if he's kept on the scent. That is to say, if he's as sharp on the track of white men as he is after runaway slaves," remarked Wright, after we had ridden a mile or so further, and slackened our pace a little.

"I remember the hut very well," I rejoined. "A congenial place for such an animal! a hospitable roof, with an old withered beldame, and her daughter, and half a score of young whelps of the same species; is it not?"

He answered affirmatively; "That's Jake Ward's house: he owns an excellent blood-hound, which is his only support. Whenever a nigger runs away, Jake and his hound are called into requisition, to track and take him."

"I guess he was not at home last night," said I,

"or his women would not have been so timid at my appearance: I called there for information, on my way to McClure's, but saw neither man nor dog."

"It's jist as well, perhaps, that you did'nt," said Cale: "for in that case, your reception might have been even less pleasant than it was—I don't consider him a safe man, and his hound has an appetite for human flesh, somewhat dangerous even to his friends, after a long abstinence. Still the dog would be invaluable to us, if once on the track of Wakeelah."

"But," said I, "has this fellow no other employment than that of hunting runaway negroes?"

"Not as I know of," was the reply. "Jake Ward, belongs to a class of what our niggers aptly call 'poor white folks,' by which they mean such of our people as own neither slaves nor land, and are little better than paupers. He is more respected than many others, perhaps, for his profession as slave-catcher makes them fear him. Indeed, they whisper harder things of him; and on such a night as last night was, they will huddle around the fire in their cabins, and, trembling at the howling of the storm, tell such stories about Jake Ward, as would make him out to be little less than a fiend incarnate; but I really believe the devil is not so black as he's painted."

"A pleasant companion this, for our long ride!" said I, smiling.

"Oh, we wont have him, along," rejoined Wright; "he might betray me. I was thinking we could borrow his hound upon promising liberal payment."

"But the four-legged brute is no more amiable than the two-legged one, you say; then how can we

manage him?" I asked, as we emerged upon an opening; scaring up, as we did so, a brace of wild turkeys.

"If Jake would go but far enough with us to put us on the track," he began to say, but I interrupted him, with "Hold up! I could swear that was the stamp of my Jack!" and dismounting, with a hand still on the bridle, I walked back a step or two, and examined the imprint of a hoof, in a red clayey spot in the road. "Look here," said I, directing his attention to it, "my horse has left his signature here as plain as ever Paddy made his mark. His foot is as small as a lady's, and as handsome. Keep your eyes open for tracks like this! Fortunately for us, the rain has softened the road, and we shall thus be enabled to trace the thief for some little distance further, at any rate."

Resuming our trot again, we passed through a piney barren, remarkable only for innumerable little sand-hills, under which were the burrows of a community of "gophers." Some of these land turtles (whose dingy brown shells, if scooped out, would have served pretty well for head pieces or helmets for men-at-arms,) were scuffling about in quest of their morning meal of herbs, while others, at the port-holes of their subterranean dwellings, basked in the sun which shone freely through the sparse and stunted trees. These the storm had spared—passing on to a loftier quarry. Here, thought I, we have two types of human life. The aspiring birds, and squirrels, that built their nests in the high boughs of yonder giants of the wood, are homeless now; their huge supports laid low by the mocking

storm: they remind me of the ambitious and proud, in society, whom the blasts of adversity lay low, and whose fall is all the harder because from a dizzy height; but these poor gophers, contented with their humble basements in this barren, with no higher monuments than these little mounds of sand, and no loftier columns than these dwarf-pines, they correspond to the denizens of earth, whose lowly sphere in life is passed unnoticed and unharmed by the storms which level high estates.

As thus I mused, we left the barren behind us, and ascended the highland, down which the mountain torrent rushed to the gorge through which it passed, and formed the creek that watered the plantations of Wright and Morlis.

Reaching a plat of tall grass—a verdant area shut in by beach-trees, red-oaks, and hickories,—to breathe our horses, my companion attracted my attention to an object under the broad spacious canopy of a magnolia tree, whose mossy base was washed by the sparkling stream. It was a fine young deer, imbibing his morning draught of “Adam’s ale,”—a far more invigorating tonic than the ante-breakfast dram of those bi-pedal bucks who begin the day with bitters and soda-water. The beautiful brown browser of the wood demonstrated immediately how well it agreed with his muscles, by bounding, as soon as he caught sight of us, across the run, and charging up the rocky ravine—only pausing a moment on the top of a huge boulder (which overhung the torrent, a little higher up,) to take a parting look at us, intruders into his forest haunt. Landseer, or our own Hinckley, should have

seen him, as he stood upon that big rock, his fine head, from which the antlers had just sprouted, turned back, and his large dark eyes gazing intently towards us. He remained but an instant, then plunged into the thicket, and we saw him no more. ●

Our horses, annoyed by the flies which had followed them from the sand-barren, were now pawing the hickory nuts, and other mast which covered the ground, impatient to move on, and amid the gibbering of countless squirrels, red, white, gray and black, we resumed the road.

CHAPTER IX.

JAKE WARD.

THE sun shining brightly into the forest, which grew less thickly wooded as we approached Ward's cabin, illuminated with its rays what little parti-colored foliage the storm had spared—making beautiful transparencies of the deep crimson leaves of the black-jack, the amber-colored maple and the golden bee-gum. An infinite number like them, of many dyes, not quite so bright, but spic-span clean, carpeted the forest and the road we travelled, with a patchwork more lovely than the most elaborate mosaic.

If our horses had been shod with felt, as Lear advises in the play, we could not have stolen upon Jake more quietly. The rabbits that flitted like shadows across the road and dissappeared in the thicket; the mottled snake that wriggled out of our track, like a streak; the diamond-eyed lizards that slid from the sunny log in the path, at our approach, were not more noiseless than the footsteps of our horses upon that thick carpet of dank leaves. We might have ridden up to the very door of the slave-hunter's cabin without the knowledge of its inmates, but the blood-hound, within, scented us while we were yet some distance away, and we heard him fiercely challenge our approach.

Wright rode up alongside the rough door, and, without dismounting, gave it a double knock with the butt of his whip; then called the occupant by name.

"Wall, wall!" said a coarse, loud voice within, "Yer need'nt make sitch an ill-fired to-do: I aint deaf!" Then in a lower, but still less amiable tone, "Ye ole catamaran, oping that yere door, 'fore I pitch this yere skillet at yer!"

At this summary "open sesame" by the Hassarac of the cave, the portal instantly opened and the Witch of Endor—I beg her pardon! I mean Jake's wife's mother, confronted us. Her shrivelled face set off by a dirty nightcap, was still further embellished with a short pipe, emitting a most diabolical smell. The upper portion of her interesting person, including her head, was curved like the top half of the letter S., and clad in a short night-gown, the sequel to which was a brief petticoat of sorry patchwork.

"Stan' out o' my daylight, an' lemme see who they be, will yer!" shouted Jake, who was sitting in the chimney corner, as cross as a bear with a sore head. Always ruffianly, he was more savage than usual now, for as we soon learnt, he had been bruised by a falling limb, on his way home, through the storm.

"It is me—Cale Wright—you know me, Jake," said my companion; "I have a job for you." The dog now began to bark again, and got the skillet for his pains. Then there was a discord of childish voices.

"Suke, ef yer don't keep them ere brats o' yourn quiet, in thar, I'll chop their ill-fired heads off shorter'n a chickings!" iterated the lord and master of the mansion, with a bitter curse—a piquant sauce with

which everything he uttered was so highly seasoned, that it was a wonder it did not blister his foul tongue.

"You Ry!" screeched a female voice, not at all like Malibran's, "don't yer hear yer father swar' he'll take yer head off, ef yer don't stop them ere childern's racket."

"Stop it!" roared Jake, with all his might; in his fury shaking both fists at his wife—another witch, a little straighter and younger than the first. "You git me some breakfast, or thar'll be a funeral soon!" Then addressing us more blandly, he began a most elaborate self-condemnation, piece by piece, beginning with his eyes, and ending with his intestines, all of which he ruthlessly consigned to a locality the most obnoxious possible to any christian gentleman: giving us to understand, at the same time, that he had married beneath him, and had led a dog's life ever since. He was sorry he had no breakfast to offer us, for he knew as well as the next man what was expected of the hospitality of a Southern gentleman; but "he allowed he done as much as any fellow could" with such a woman as he had to preside over his household. "Howsever, gen'l'mun, 'light and come in. That condemned storm last night has disenabled me. I'm nearly kilt; but who cares, dro't 'em?" and here he scowled his forehead at his wife, who was cutting pork middlings into a spider at the fire. "Tie yer hosses to that ere stake, and come in." Adding, by way of making us more at ease, an affectionate objurcation against our eyes, as he had before against his own, and swearing we should drink whiskey with him.

I wanted his help too badly to think it proper to

show the disgust I felt for him, and so led the way into the house. It was a very common log cabin, in two compartments, like McClure's, but not near as large and comfortable. In the kitchen there were sleeping accommodations (if they could be called such,) for Jake and his wife and her mother: the children seeming to monopolize the inner chamber, for they were all there, spying at us through the chinks in the rude partition.

The blood-hound—a full, flap-eared, wide-chapped animal, white where it was not tan-colored—growled ominously as we crossed the threshold, and would have sprung at me, but a blow and a word from his master (to whose feet he then crawled,) cowed him, and he did nothing more to evince his dislike than to cast furtive glances at us from his great red eyes.

“Helkite!” said Jake to the old witch who stood staring at us, with her hands behind her, “git the whiskey.”

“Yis, yis, yis!” rejoined she, eagerly and went to a sort of cupboard.

Jake was rather a large-boned man, with very small light gray eyes, tolerably regular features, a red whiskerless face, and a shock of chestnut hair, cut by pumpkin measure—a tonsorial triumph due to Ry (Maria) his eldest daughter, who commonly achieved it once a month, by placing upon the paternal head half of a pumpkin, (scooped out and dried for the purpose,) and cutting off any locks of hair growing below the rim of it. He was in his shirt, and a pair of coarse heavy trowsers, tanned yellow-brown with a decoction of hickory bark; to which, by the way, most of

the clothing in that region of the country was indebted for its color.

The room had no wainscoting, nor any other wood-work than the logs of which it was composed. There were a deal table, two or three old rush-bottomed chairs nearly minus the rushes, two whiskey-kegs for seats and a barrel to cut bacon and tend the baby on. Over the large clay fire-place, hung a cheap colored print of a personage with high cheek bones, a corrugated brow and hair standing on end like the quills of the fretful porcupine. "That's John C. Calhoun, of South Carolina, the greatest man which ever lived," said Jake, seeing me glance at the picture: "an' tother am another condemnashing peert chap in his way: that's Gibbs the pirate. But here's ole spitfire with the liquor! Here's to State Rights," he continued after he had turned some whiskey into tin cups and raised one, nearly full of the corrosive fluid, to his bloated lips, "State rights, and all the Wrights! Ha, ha, haw, haw!"

While this interesting specimen of humanity was choking with a guffaw, which would come up while the whiskey was on its way down, the old woman, who had been looking on very enviously, observing that I declined to drink, hastily seized in her long talons the cup which had been set for me, and swallowed its contents, unseen by her affectionate son-in-law.

As soon as the war between the contending forces in his throat would allow him to get breath, Jake began by cursing his eyes again, and swearing that at gittin' off a good thing, he allowed there was no man went afore him. Then seeing my companion's untasted

cup half full, he took it up; remarking, "Why, Cale, yer don't despise sitch whiskey as this yere, do yer? You haint drank it half way up! Yer friend here (what's his name?) has tost his off like a man."

"I reck'n I'll jist wet my lips with it, Jakey, dear!" said his mother-in-law, wheedlingly, and extending her claw.

"Don't make a beast o' yerself, mammy!" cried his wife, setting down the snuff into which she was dipping, while frying the bacon, and rising from her squatting posture, to take the cup from her husband, "your lips, drot 'em! soak up whiskey like a sponge!"

"'Norder that thar may'nt be no squabbling 'tween you two, here goes the cause on't!" said Jake gravely, and gulped down the contents of the cup. "Now," added he, with the air of a judge resolved upon the rigid execution of a most righteous sentence, "don't let either on yer take a drap o' whiskey fur a hull month. I've said it, and what I say I'll stick to." Then warming with virtuous indignation, as he detected discontented looks exchanged between the two women, he swore an oath of a very complicated and fiery construction, involving the probable perdition of two souls, at least; and bade them have a care, or he should lose his temper. He would be master in his own house, &c.

"Call Ry here," he iterated in a commanding tone to his shrinking wife.

"She can't come," she responded, deprecatingly.

"Why not?" demanded Jake, impatiently.

"She aint fixed," was the reply.

"Aint fixed? aint —!" (he blurted out the name

of a very bad place,) then shouted, "You Ry; you come here!"

"Oh, the devil!" exclaimed the girl, who had been listening to all that had passed: "Can't yer wait a minute?"

"No!" roared her irate papa, mad at having his authority temporised with, no matter what the cause. "Come straight here, this yere instant!"

"Wall, here I am," said his daughter—a girl of sixteen—entering reluctantly, just as she had risen from her bed with the children on the floor in the other room, "Now, dad, what d'ye want in sitch an all-fired hurry?"

Her discontented look changed to one half-coy, half-defiant, as her glance met mine, and then averted to the floor. The sole garment she wore, only covering a portion of a form rather tall for her age, revealed more fulness and symmetry of bust and limb, than were to have been expected from the offspring of such a mother. Indeed she resembled that amiable snuff-dipper mainly in her nose, the bone of which had a prominence, evidently a family feature on the maternal side. The same peculiarity characterized the sallow faces of some eight or nine other children, her sisters; all younger than she, and tapering down in size from five to two feet high, as near as I could measure them with my eyes as they crowded into the doorway between the two rooms, and stared at us.

"Hold up yer head, gal!" said Jake, imperiously. Obedient to command, she raised that matted tow institution, and turned a sallow and not over-clean countenance to her half-drunken sire. "Yer look,"

said he "zif ye'd stolen a sheep! Ye aint ashamed o' them legs, air ye?"

"Don't talk so, Jake!" said Mrs. Ward. "Let her go and git her frock on."

"Silence!" roared her husband, at the top of his lungs: "or I'll make Rome howl!" Then more gently to the girl, "Ry squat down here, and loosen a little this yere condemned rag on my hurt limb."

Ry kneeled upon the hearth, with a blushing look at me, and proceeded to slacken the bandage which girt the bruise.

"Oh, oh, be monsus car'ful!" said Ward, wincing, and laying his rough hand upon her plump neck, from which the coarse unbleached muslin tunic hung too loosely to hide what it was intended to conceal: "Blast yer, be more car'ful! Oh dear, oh dear! it's a mighty bad hurt. I can't begin to go with yer, Cale, on ary trampoose to-day. Ry, gal, you must go: you'll do as wall. Thar, thar, that'll do! Now go and rag up a little and take the houn' and go with these gen'tlmun."

"Not till I get some breakfus'; though," said she, and disappeared.

I was not sorry, that we were not to have his agreeable company; and as his assurance that the girl was about as keen on a scent as the dog itself, was corroborated by a report which Wright had often heard to the same effect, I offered no objection; only stipulating that she should swallow her breakfast and be off in a hurry.

"That's my way," responded Jake with an oath, "and the gal takes arter me. Suke, air yer gwine to be forever gittin' breakfus'? Fy done my duty by

yer, you'd git a lickin'. Make haste, or I'll skin ye alive!"

In two minutes, the bacon and a dish of steaming hot colewort (better known as "long collards,") were on the rough deal table, and Ry and her father eating voraciously, while the rest of the family looked greedily on.

"Thar'll be a great sight o' that bacon left, you Ry!" exclaimed her mother, reproachfully.

"You take small mouthfuls, daddy!" was the indignant chime of another.

"By mighty!" cried Jake, rising, red with rage, and condemning the "immortal part of them" to everlasting perdition, "who is master of this yere cabin? Is Jake Ward dead? Not if he knows his-self! Jake's still alive and commands the ship."

To repress my laughter, I turned to the hound which, sharing his master's ire or sympathizing in his excitement, was now barking furiously.

"Down, Blood! down, down I say!" shouted Jake, and taking the dish of bacon from the table he set it before him on the floor. The animal made only two mouthfuls of it, and swallowed at a gulp a potato thrown to him by the same hand.

"Now," said he, with a spiteful curl of the lip, to his family, "yer may git yer breakfast at dinner time."

CHAPTER X.

THE SLAVE-CATCHER'S DAUGHTER.

"I RECKON I'm ready now," said Ry, and called the hound out of the cabin. The only article of dress visible upon the girl, was a brown tow homespun frock extending a little below her knees. Her feet were bare, and on her little head she wore only a bright tin band to hold back her hay-colored hair. The fair reader must not infer, that this uncouth specimen of her sex was altogether ugly. Her forehead was too low, her face too thin and sallow, and her nose too prominent; but her eye, though small, was a sparkling blue (or gray, I forget which;) she had a pretty mouth and chin, a well-rounded arm, and a form so well developed by healthy exercise, that it must needs be elastic and graceful. To a remark of mine that she could not keep up with us, she replied, "Can't I?" and bounded away like a deer.

As she ran, accompanied by the hound, she only lacked a quiver of arrows at her shoulder, and a bow in her hand, to remind one of Diana, the huntress. I must confess, however, that distance lent all the enchantment: close to, Ry was no goddess.—Who is?

"Yer may bet yer life on her," said Ward, looking after her complacently; for notwithstanding he often

treated her with absolute brutality, he was proud of this the eldest scion of his house and heart. "She kin run her mile in three minutes, and knows every crook and sign in the woods, in all this yere region."

His parting words followed us, for we were on the road again, at a brisk trot. We had lost the track of my stolen animal upon entering the sand barren, and the forest was so thickly strewn with autumnal leaves that he had left no print, possible to identify; but on coming up to where Ry and "Blood" awaited us, I saw in the soft, dark loam the hoof-prints of my faithful Jack.

The girl, and her father, had supposed that we were wanting the hound put upon the trail of an absconding slave, (as we had said nothing to the contrary,) and when I pointed to my horse's footmarks and told her that I wanted her to follow up that track, she exclaimed in surprise.

"Nen, the nigger cleared his-self a-hoe-back, hey?" Then added, with a wink and insinuating look at Wright, "I reckon ye'll pay right smart ef I cotch the critter, too? I'm orful on't fur a bettermost frock!"

"I'll promise to give you, in that case," said I, smiling, "as gay a dress as can be found in Milledgeville."

"Will yer?" she exclaimed, joyfully clapping her hands together. "Real store caliker?"

"Yes," said I, laughing; "and a red silk sash, with it."

"By cracky!" she cried, and jumping up and down with gladness, "you're a hull team and a hoss to let. I like you fus' rate."

"Thank you, sweet Diana," said I.

"That's a rare pretty name!" she rejoined.

"I'll call you so; but make haste and put the dog on that track," said I.

She whistled the hound to her, and pointed out to him, the mark to which I had called her attention. The sagacious animal smelt it carefully. "Seek him!" said Diana. At the word he started off, with his nose to the earth; baying to his young mistress to follow.

"Come on!" she cried to us, as she trotted off behind him. We were not slow to comply. Presently the road entered another wood, where we could not detect a track of any kind; but the hound's unerring instinct led him straight on, without pausing. It was a treat to see the buoyant step with which our Diana kept constantly in advance of us, without any apparent fatigue. A venomous snake, sunning himself in a warm spot in her path, sprang at her as she passed: I heard its terrible rattle, and trembled for her bare feet and limbs; but she vaulted beyond his reach and went on unharmed; leaving the baffled reptile to be trampled to death under our horse's hoofs. The hound, in his progress, (his nose down constantly,) startled from its greenwood covert a noble buck; and now, thinks I, our dog will leave his cold scent, and make a dash for the game in sight! But no; not he. Destiny is not more unerring than a blood-hound to the track he is started on: unless, indeed, he follow it to a stream or other body of water, and then he is at fault; as was ours when, after several hours spent in the chase, the road brought us to a small river known as the Nantahala, one of the sources of the

Tennessee. We found Blood running hither and thither on the bank, snuffing the earth; evidently very much chagrined.

Here, too, the bridge had been carried away by the temporary freshet. During the day, the water had subsided nearly to its usual depth, and we, on horseback, could ford it in safety. But how was our goddess Diana to get over? She offered either to wade or swim it, but neither Cale nor I would accede. As we stood at the river's edge, giving our thirsty horses the only swallow of water they had had for several hours (for we had not stopped at the Indian huts on our way, but followed the dog implicitly) the athletic girl, who had been paddling her brown feet in the stream, with her hand upon the pommel of my saddle, suddenly, almost before I was aware of it, sprang up in front of me, and laughingly, bade me hold on to her or she should pitch into the drink. Instinctively my left arm encircled her waist and held her close, for as the four-legged party to this double load had his withers inclined towards the water, there was danger of her sliding over his head. Cale smiled and Diana gave vent to a burst of merriment, which brought to her tanned complexion a flush of rose color. I thought of "the nut-brown maid," of the English ballad, and was tolerably resigned to my situation, in spite of the intruding query which suggested itself, "Will the brute carry us safe over?"

"Never fear Black Morgan," said Wright, guessing my thought: "he is strong and used to fording. You go ahead, and I will follow with the

hound. If any accident happens, Ry can swim you know!"

"Don't mind me: I'm all right!" cried my Diana, evidently well pleased with her seat.

Our horses took to the river kindly, and walked into it until the water reached their flanks. "I wont get my frock wet, ef tis an old one; would yer?" she said, and without waiting for a reply, pulled the scant skirt out of the way of the encroaching stream.

"Now," said she, with a little laugh and coloring again, "give me the lines and I'll let the critter swim."

So we swum the current—Cale and the hound following in our wake. I shall never forget ("as long as memory holds her seat," half as well as Ry did hers,) that remarkable passage of the nymph and I across the Nantahala!

Maugre the girl's ignorance and rough manners, I had conceived a certain sort of friendliness for her, and when our steed had clomb the farther bank, where the road began at a piney wood, I benevolently told her she might keep her place a little longer if she chose.

"Aint you good?" she rejoined archly, and laughing again. "Take your arm away, and let me jump down! I weigh a hundred and forty, and this pretty critter o' yourn has enough to do to carry you alone. See, Blood is on the scent again! But who's that comin' yonder?"

"I can't see any one," said Cale.

"Nor I neither, now," she rejoined, "but let me have a good look!" and she rose to her feet in her

place on the horse, and steadying herself with her left hand on my head, gazed forward on the track now taken by the baying hound, through a vista of pines.

"It is a trav'ler on hoe-back, comin' this way!" said she, and leaped lightly to the ground.

CHAPTER XI.

A FRENCH COUNT.

In a minute or two, the stranger came in sight, mounted on a white-footed bay, with a white star in his forehead.

"Shall we question him?" asked Cale.

"Perhaps so," I replied.

"He rides a pretty beast," I remarked, "but I don't like his marks."

"Wall, now, ef that yere don't beat all!" cried Ry, who was walking by the side of Black Morgan: "I hope I may be shot, ef that aint our Blood follerin' at his heels!"

"That is queer," said Cale.

"I reckon he's got the ager," said Ry; "he's got a handkercher over his chops."

In two or three minutes more, we met the stranger face to face. He had a foreign look, gray hair under a broad-brimmed Panama hat, a white moustache, a pair of gold-bowed spectacles and a green broadcloth frock, mounted with black silk frogs and a profusion of braid. Upon the little finger of his rein hand, glistened a valuable diamond ring. He was the first to salute.

"Bon jour, gentils-hommes!" said he, blandly,

touching his hat, and bowing until his nose nearly touched his horse's mane.

"Good morning, sir!" I responded; and willing to air my French a little, added,—"*Il est un beau temps!*"

"Oho!" he exclaimed, with a shrug of the shoulders; "*Monsieur speaks de French?*"

"Un peu," I rejoined.

"*Sacre!*" he exclaimed, raising his hand to his face, "dis what you call ague make my jaw shake so, I can hardly prononce my own langwarah! *Mon ami vill pardonnez moi if I speaks l'Anglais. Ma foi! I tink you comprenez mon Anglais much petter dan I onderstand your French; aha! Whoa, back, back!*"

This command was addressed to his jaded horse, which had approached me with a whinner, and now rubbed his nose against my hand.

"I tink him 'fraid of dat mauvais chien—le diable, de dog!" said he, and venting an oath upon the steed, whose curious action attracting the notice of my companions, he jerked the bridle violently and turning its head to pass us, thrust his spurs into its sweating sides. Galled by the prick, the animal gave a leap which unhatted the Monsieur, and nearly sent him over its head; but he was a good rider and saved himself in time. Fortunately, his hat was secured to a button hole by a string. In the meantime, Blood was in a high state of excitement, and looked as if he would spring to the saddle. Again the stranger applied both whip and spur. Aggravated beyond endurance, his horse gave another leap, and with the hound at his heels, darted forward like lightning, over the road by

which we had come. It was evident that Monsieur had found more than his match, now.

Anxious to see whether he would obtain the mastery before reaching the rather abrupt bank of the river to which the road conducted, we turned back and followed them at a smart pace; my heathen goddess outstripping us by running.

"He'll drown him in the river!" shouted Cale to me.

"Unless he's a swimmer," said I.

Onward the fugitive flew like a deer: the fleet hound followed hard upon. Almost as swift went "cutty sark:" then came Wright and I, toiling after, at a round trot. It was a scene for the author of "John Gilpin."

The river is at hand; the desperate horse is rushing for it like a streak! he is at the brink! now for a plunge! No: on the very margin of the steep bank, he stops abruptly, and stands stock-still, with his forefeet planted on the verge, offering a firm resistance to his own momentum. The rider, not having any such brace, is pitched incontinently, clear into the current head-first, and comes up snorting and splurging to the surface, to the infinite amazement of an old Cherokee who is floating down with a canoe-load of venison and river-ducks.

Ry's vociferous laughter, as she stands upon the bank, peals through the forest and reverberates up and down the sequestered river. Cale and I arrived in time to see the Indian help the unlucky adventurer into his canoe, safe from a watery grave, and the teeth of the persistent canine pursuer.

With a volley of wrath, the rescued man drew a pistol from his pocket and discharged two barrels at the unfortunate hound, with fatal effect. Poor Blood! With one loud, prolonged yelp, that was echoed far and near, (as if the river were lined with dying dogs,) he sank to rise no more.

Then, Ry's merriment was changed to wailing and gnashing of teeth, with the addition of what is called, in Congress, strong language; as she saw the murderer float safely away down the river in the canoe (to whose owner he had probably promised liberal compensation,) and disappear around a neighboring bend.

CHAPTER XII.

THE STOLEN HORSE.

My attention was now occupied with the horse who had been the cause of the Frenchman's discomfort. There was not a dry hair on him: he breathed short and hard, and trembled like a nervous woman: all of which was not strange in a finely strung animal of his species; but what made me wonder, was, that he should come directly to me as soon as I rode up to the bank, and with a whinner, almost plaintive, rub his white-starred head against my leg, in the most affectionate and joyful manner that a horse is capable of using.

As I was not aware of possessing any of that mysterious affinity, or influence, by which about one person in a million, is said to attract the love of a horse to him at first sight, I was for a few moments at a loss to divine the cause in the present case.

"Do you see," said I to Wright, "how this horse takes to me?"

"Aint it your own?" he rejoined. "The horse-thieves are very successful in altering the looks of the beasts they steal; and this one looks as if his mane and tail had been newly trimmed."

He had no sooner suggested the idea, than the

whole truth flashed upon me; this was no other than my dear Jack, so thoroughly disguised that his own mother wouldn't have known him, unless by instinct, which in many respects is more reliable than reason.

"My poor girl," said I, to our sorrowing companion, "I have found my horse; now dry your tears, and we will try to compensate your father for his dog."

"Ef yer don't," said she, "he'll make Rome howl, (as he calls it,) at hum."

"Be good enough to dip this handkerchief of mine in the river and bring it to me; I want to wash off this white mark, here."

She complied with all reasonable alacrity, and returning with the saturated rag, applied it with a will to the forehead of poor Jack, who, with all the docility of a sitter in a barber's chair, quietly submitted to the champoning.

Ry was a good scrubber, and having in a few minutes, removed the paint from my beast's head, she proceeded to perform the same good office for his feet. She would have made an excellent groom.

While Ry was thus usefully employed, Wright and I were conversing about the supposed Frenchman, the horse and the child. After we had talked a little, he put to me the question.

"Did it occur to you, when face to face with him, that you had seen him before?"

"Now you mention it," I replied "such an impression did occur to me; but I couldn't place him. (That is, I couldn't say when or where I had seen him.) He looked like a French professor."

"Can you think of no one that he resembled?" said Cale, with a look of intelligence.

"Slightly," I replied, "if you will pardon me! To be candid with you, my friend, he looked a little like yourself."

"'Pon my word," he rejoined, a flush of color mounting to his pale countenance, "you do me infinite honor! Rather say he reminds you of the Cherokee, Wakeelah!"

"By the lord Harry!" I exclaimed, "you are right! And what theory is fairly deducible from this?"

"That the Frenchman and the Cherokee are one and the same person," he replied.

"Est il possible!" murmured I, mimicking Monsieur's tone and shrug.

"It is even possible that yonder rogne is the notorious Murrell, himself," added Cale,

"You don't say so!" cried Ry, who had now finished her kind office for my horse; "Wall now I wish I could jis' take a good long look at him! He's right smart, they say, and as brave as a lion; and has broke out o' jail a dozen times or more; but that's no excuse for his killin' our dog!" And then her countenance, which had beamed with all a woman's admiration for a fearless adventurer, became overcast again.

"Let us pursue and capture him at all hazards!" I exclaimed, ignoring every other consideration in my eagerness to bring to justice a wretch whose name had become a terror and by-word in every community, and upon every plantation, from the Ohio to the Gulf."

"You forget the child!" said Cale to me, reproachfully, in a low tone, not audible to the girl.

"Forgive me sir," I replied, "I plead guilty. I had, indeed, forgotten poor little Waifwood, as we call her."

"But how to recover the poor thing?" said he "Certainly not by pursuing yonder horse-thief."

"True," I rejoined, "but what course shall we take? Had we the hound, now, we could put him on the scent and trace the course which the robber had followed before we encountered him returning: and in doing so, we should obtain, I think, some clue to his disposal of your little one."

"What, think you, was he taking the back track for?" said Cale.

"I guess he thought to obtain a passage for himself and my horse down the river; perhaps in the very boat which he is now in. Probably that old Indian lives somewhere hereabouts, and has a good understanding with him. Quite likely, little Waifwood is in his cabin, with his old squaw, at this moment."

"For God's sake, then," said Wright, in a low but earnest tone, "let us find his hut while we yet have the light of day with us! And Major, you will keep my secret?"—

He paused a moment, and looked around at the girl. She was out of ear-shot, having led my horse a little distance off, to a place where he could drink conveniently.

"I want to ask a great favor, and am rather delicate about putting the question, too!" he continued, coloring slightly, and casting down his large blue eyes.

"Out with it!" I exclaimed, bluffly, "anything in reason, cap'n", as the green-hand said, when he declined to furl a topsail in a storm."

"That girl, thar, must needs know presently that we are hunting up a lost child: you understand?" said he, smoothing with tremulous hand the mane of the handsome beast he rode. I nodded assent.

"For good reasons," he continued, "as you can well conceive, I don't want her or any one else to know, that I am the father."

Here Cale hesitated again, and manipulated the forelock of his steed.

"I comprehend," was my response.

"But you see," said he, "that somebody must claim a right to the child, and if you—if you"—he stammered again.

"Speak it," said I, "Ry is coming back."

"Well, as you have already had so much to do with the baby, I—I"—and here the poor fellow stuck again.

I had to laugh, but restored his equanimity by a few friendly words.

"I see how it is: you would have me adopt little Waifwood as my own. Well, I am a bachelor, without family or friends in these parts, and I suppose the scandal, if any, wont hurt me. I have given it a name, and ought to accord it, perhaps, something better."

He took my hand, and pressing it warmly, said with tremulous lips.

"A thousand, thousand thanks, sir! It is a great service.—"

"But not much of a responsibility," I interrupted, with a smile. "Say no more about it—here is our goddess, Diana, returned with the well-pleased Jack."

It was, indeed, amusing to observe the joy of my quadrupedal friend at his restoration, and when he had almost pushed me from the back of Black Morgan and in a manner compelled me to get upon his own, his satisfaction expelled all fatigue from his symmetrical limbs and he walked the leafy earth as buoyant and high-spirited as if fresh from a week's furlough. Surely, if woman was 'God's first, best gift to man,' the second best was the horse!

"Dost know, O gentle Diana!" said I to the amiable Amazon, "any cabin in this immediate vicinity?"

She shook her head, and reckoned we must be hard on to, or quite inside, the Tennessee line.

"Do you think you can keep the run of my horse's tracks on the path the Frenchman was coming by, when we met him?"

"I can try," she replied, "but you don't say you're gwine any further?"

"You see," I replied, "that rascal has exchanged my saddle and bridle for these poor concerns. Now, probably he has a haunt, or refuge, not far off."

"By mighty! I'd guv a heap to see it," exclaimed Ry, "praps we'll git thar time enough for supper. I'm's jist as keen set for suthing to eat as ever a poor mortal war!"

"We'll take a bite now;" said I, "but it's the last of the lunches for six, put up for us by the good

Mrs. McClure, and must be only a repetition of our noon-tide meal."

The bread and bacon were accordingly produced from Black Morgan's saddle-bags, and soon eaten up; which achievement ended, the alimentitive Ry, who was the largest eater of the three, announced that she was all right and ready for the road again.

When we had resumed the route by which Jack had returned to the river, the intelligent animal seemed to understand, that he was to show me where he had been taken to by his kidnapper, for when we were going straight on by the stage road, he turned off at an obscure path, and seemed bent upon pursuing it. Ry ran forward along the by-way, to see, if she could, some sign that he had been over it before. In a few moments, she shouted that she had found his track. It was at the margin of a small, clear cold spring, which had made its bed at the foot of an immense cypress tree. Jack walked directly up to it, and reached down his head to drink. Evidently he had had a taste of its quality before. But after us was manners, as Ry said, and the humans were served first, for the bacon had made us dry.

Then I led the way up the wooded slope of one of the many hills that compose the range of mountains dividing the tributaries of the Mississippi and the Gulf from those streams whose courses tend towards the Atlantic ocean. Lofty oaks, laden with acorns, and beech-trees plentifully strewing the ground under them with their own fruit, were the kinds of trees most common here. Their towering branches were all alive with squirrels and twittering birds; the trunks of the

oldest, the indefatigable wood-pecker was knocking for his diet of worms: here and there a wise old owl, a judge perhaps among the feathered denizens, dozed in his elevated station. Now and then, a hog almost wild from its long-enjoyed franchise of the forest, and his feed of unctuous mast, and good fat rattlesnakes, would make his appearance, only to utter a short, harsh grunt and run away again.

Presently, we came to a gay young streamlet, racing down, to join a fellow who was to meet and marry it, at some Gretna Green below. In the dark loam which it moistened as it passed, we saw the foot-prints of birds and animals, of various kinds, and even the tracks of a bear or two. Obscure as it was, the rivulet had many friends, who would be sorry to lose it.

Crossing this sparkling water, my horse led the way, followed by Black Morgan bearing Ry; while Wright and his steed brought up the rear: and, in this order, we threaded the upland wilderness in silence, broken only occasionally by a stave of some plantation song from the not unmusical throat of the damsel. It was a singularly picturesque path, and I took little notes of the waning daylight. At length, Wright shouted to me a question. Was I confident, that my horse was following any path, and not straying at random into the wilderness? Then, I took a hard look ahead, and could not wonder that he doubted: it was now the gloaming, and so dusky that the eye could not detect any trace of a path. Still my good steed pressed forward with so firm a manner, that I resolved to trust to his sagacity.

So we went on, our "dubous" way illuminated presently by the rising moon. We reached, at last, more level ground, and a smaller growth of trees—bee-gum, black-jack and persimmon. The plum-like fruit of the latter, puckery as alum in the mouth, if not mellow-ripe, was now soft and sweet as honey, and in the leafless trees to whose twigs it adhered without a stem, we could see coons and possums feeding luxuriously.

"A possum aint bad eatin'," said Ry: "ef dad was here, he'd shoot a few."

"I'll try a pistol-shot at one of them, if you wish," said L. "The good people with whom we are to lodge to-night may be glad to get it."

"Don't fire!" cried the young Amazon. "Let me try! I've hit a mark with a rifle, an' I reckon I kin bring down one o' them critters."

She blazed away at a gay young fellow, who sat perched like a squirrel, on a limb of a gum-tree, a few yards off, eating a cluster of persimmons, and cocking his eye at the moon, which now appeared above the wood, her big, white orb beaming full upon him, with ne'er a wink to warn him of his peril. He dropped first the persimmons, and then himself. In the flower of possum-hood, he fell. Ry was down as soon as he, and the wildwood rang with her exultant laugh.

"Dead as a door-nail!" said she, turning over the quarry with her foot. "Here's yer shooter, Maje: now you try and beat that, ef yer kin!"

She handed me the pistol as she spoke, and turned to take up her game; but before she could lay hold of it, the possum up, and ran! True to his traditional in-

stinct, his sudden decease had been only pretended; (Cardinal Richelieu once played upon an enemy a similar ruse :) and Cale and I could not help laughing heartily at Ry, as the possum scud into his hole.

"By the livin' jingo! Gimme that yere shooter agin!" she exclaimed, a little annoyed: "I don't mind your laffin, the least speck, but thar's an old coon up thar grinnin' at me rale hateful!"

I handed the weapon to her, and, taking aim more carefully than before, she discharged it. The coon mortally wounded, came down: not "kerchunk," but by slow (if not easy) stages, and under protest—catching at every limb, on the way, and uttering a sharp objection. After a number of catches, not sung, and several falls, not rapid, he descended, not upon the ground, (where the sanguine and sanguinary Ry stood ready to administer extreme unction to his unctuous coonship,) but chouse upon her head, which, being unbonneted, afforded his long, sharp claws a tip-top hold. In its last fall it had made an unseasonable spring—one of those admirable muscular feats by which great gymnasts will show you, for a pecuniary consideration, how you may drop from the top of a house, and, when half way down, (not turn about and go back again, but) overcome, or so modify, your impetus as to take an oblique direction to the earth. So with the old coon: if he had come down in the usual respectable, perpendicular way, conformably to the eternal law of gravitation, Miss Ward would have been, to use her own expression, all right; but confound him! when within a dozen feet (not counting his own,) he must needs assert the power of a live will over inanimate inertia,

by a sudden violent muscular action that precipitated him, as has been already stated, into the redundant hair of his astonished enemy.

To say that the young lady screamed, would be tame: if not too inelegant, we would use the word yelled. It would do the subject more justice. She also raved, and stamped, and tore her hair, in getting the "critter" off. It was like pulling teeth; an extracting operation almost warranting the use of chloroform. As the coon's claws were long and sharp, it was fortunate that our Diana's locks were thick and matted otherwise her scalp must have suffered some: as it was, they performed (imperfectly it is true but in a measure,) the office of an institution, to that head long a stranger, to wit: a comb. There was a sort of triangular snarl, in which the hair, the coon and the lady each took a part: though the coon got the best of it: that is to say the best of the hair: in every other sense he was worsted, for with her own delicate hands, she garoted him—uttering many of her father's expletives meanwhile—and at the expense of sundry hay-colored tresses, (which did not come without extracting a few shrieks by the roots, as it were,) hurled him down upon his native sod. That was the end of him. As he was too tough to eat he was left as a warning to all old coons, not to expose themselves to the night air.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DARK HOUSE.

CONTINUING our travel, we soon had the extreme felicity of arriving at a clearing, upon the further side of which we thought we could descry one or two buildings. Passing through a corn-field, the dry stalks of which Black Morgan was much inclined to eat, we reached a solitary dwelling-place; wondering that any one could, by any possible inducement, voluntarily abide there.

If it had not been for the presence of another building, its solitude would have appeared uncanny, and not to be endured by any well-disposed mortal; but there is something so humanizing in the appearance of a barn—something so suggestive of man's kindness and good feeling, even to the brutes—that it confers, in a greater or less degree, a charm upon the house itself.

No light was visible within either of the cabins; but as we approached noiselessly over the soft field, we heard the voices of inmates of the place; one a pleasant strain, as of a woman coaxing a husband for a new silk; the other gruff and growly, as elderly gentlemen often are when so beset.

One knock at the door with the butt of my riding

whip, elicited only a growl; another was responded to, in a voice singularly soft and oleaginous.—“Who dar?” inquired one within: evidently a female. To inspire her with more confidence to receive us, I got one of her own gentle sex to reply.

“We’re three travellers, I allow,” said Ry. “Strike a light and let us in, will ye?”

“Oh lard-a-massy, child, I aint got no candle, and no nuffin!” replied the occupant, in a tone of bland protest. “How de law, did yer go and done git strayed so, off the stage road?”

“We’ve lost our way, in this yere howlin’ wil’ness!” answered Ry.

“We are after a child that was stolen by an Indian, this morning, from Major McClure’s cabin,” said Cale. “Have you seen, or do you know any thing about it?”

“Goramassy knowed, I don’t,” she replied; “It is so out o’ the way here; I doesn’t know not nuffin dat’s gwine on.”

Then the door opened, and there appeared, the very broad and corpulent owner of the soft, slushy voice: a negress weighing (I didn’t lift her, but I think I may safely say,) not less than three hundred pounds; but beyond her ample person nothing was visible.

“Ef yer come in,” said she, blockading the portal with her large figure, “yer can’t hab not no light, an’ not no kinweniences. Seb’n mile further on, dar is a cab’n whar I know dey got a light.”

“Never mind the light,” said I; “only let us put

our horses in the barn, and ourselves into some of your beds."

, "Lard-a-massy! I should tink de young gemman tink I was made o' beds!" she exclaimed. It would not have been strange, if I had: the Falstaffs of the stage, if not belied, are bellied with pillows.

"De gemman, and his wife, kin sleep togedder in de spar' room, and de other kin stow his-self in a chair in de chimbley, I 'pose so," added the fat woman, considerably; but hearing our chaste Diana titter at the idea of her being Cale's wife, she said with a smile, "I allows, miss, you aint married, prehaps? Wall, fix it amongst yerselves: dar's only one spar' bed anyhow!" and we could hear her salacious chuckle and knew that her fat sides shook with merriment.

"Have you neither lantern nor lightwood, for us to see by, in the barn?" I inquired.

"De moonshine 'll do," she replied. "I aint not got no matches, nor no nuffin. Tie yer hosses in dar somewhar, till mornin': dar's water in the bar'l and some feed in the furdur corner, nex de meal-tub."

In compliance with her suggestion, we bestowed our animals in the log-but which served as a stable, and then went to the house and groped our way in the darkness to seats which the negress had set for us. We could hear the hard breathing of the old fellow, whoever he was, and other sounds suggestive of a sleeping household.

In a few moments, our tired female companion was induced to take possession of the inner room, for the night; while Wright and I should pass the rosy hours in talking and dozing, in the chimney corner.

CHAPTER XIV.

A MIND O'ER THROWN.

THE next morning, we returned from our fruitless pursuit.

"I HAVE been thinking how my poor Lu will bear the loss of our child!" said Wright, with a deep sigh, after a long and moody silence.

We had left the slave-catcher's cabin some ways behind us, and could hear, afar off, in the stillness of the forest, the rush of the mountain torrent down its rocky bed in the distant ravine.

"I suppose she is worrying about it now. You have no idea how I dread to meet her!"

I replied, "unless Mr. McClure has told her, that it was kidnapped, she may suppose her baby died in the storm by which she came so near losing her own life."

"No, no," he rejoined; "the McClures never evade or conceal anything: they have probably told her the whole truth, and when she sees us return without the child, it will drive her crazy!"

"It cannot be so bad as that: let us hope for better things!" said I.

"Alas!" he sighed, "you do not know how sensitive her organization is."

"My heart bleeds for her," I rejoined "but, surely, if it had pleased God to take the infant's life in that

tempest, you would have acknowledged it to have been all for the best; and as it is—”

“I know what you would say, sir,” said he, interrupting me, a little testily: “we have talked all that matter over, you know, before.”

“Are you a believer in special providences?” said I.

“No,” he replied, curtly.

“I am,” I rejoined.

He made no response, and neither of us spoke for some minutes: then he renewed the subject voluntarily.

“Why did you ask if I believed in special providences?” he inquired.

“Because,” said I, “if you did, you would recognize the hand of God in these affairs which you now regard so despairingly: and knowing Him to be as wise and good as He is omnipotent, you would cease to repine against events which He has ordered and man cannot alter.”

“Argued like a preacher!” he rejoined, a little peevishly. Grief, fatigue and fasting had unmanned him: perceiving which I relapsed into silence. But he was not inclined to drop the subject.

“Will you be kind enough to tell me, sir,” he demanded, “wherein you see the hand of Providence in any of these calamities which have befallen the unhappy Lu and myself?”

“Cheerfully!” I replied, and instanced, at some length the points in which I believed the divine interposition was manifest.

“And perhaps you will tell me,” said he, almost

sneeringly, "why a beneficent God ordained, that a sensitive, intellectual creature like Lu should have been born in slavery: why my love for her is culpable in the sight of men: why a public acknowledgment of my marriage to her would excite a universal howl of condemnation?"

Not being an ingenious logician, fertile in replies, I had none to offer; perceiving which he poured forth a volley of indignation upon the injustice of fortune, and the avarice, pride and cruelty of society, as illustrated in the case of his wife.

"Yet for all this," said I, "good may come of it, eventually. God can make the wrath of men to praise him: that is to say, with the worst intentions, they often involuntarily conduce to the accomplishment of good results. The very injustice of which you complain may become one of the moving causes to a great change in social estimates, in fact to a revolution, involving not only the remedy of the wrongs which you condemn so feelingly, but the amelioration of an extensive class of evils inflicted by communities upon individuals. So that these very misfortunes instead of impugning the divine goodness, may be providentially designed to eventually illustrate it."

"I cannot see it," rejoined Cale sullenly.

"Man is short-sighted," said I; "he cannot see ahead, far and wide enough, to take into his finite view the operating causes in the infinite plan: if he could, he would be little less than divine."

"And when, think you," he rejoined, sarcastically, "when will these wrongs have been heaped up high enough, in the face of heaven, to topple over on the

heads of society which sanctions them? And what compensation can either Lu or I find for our unhappy lot in the belief that our individual sufferings are contributing to a result so beneficent, but which we may not live long enough to see?"

"It is true," said I, "that it is much easier to preach, than to practise, patience; but for all that, I don't know any better recourse for you than religion and philosophy."

Something very like a curse escaped from him, and with a bitter, exasperated look and tone, he added. "The perpetrators of these infamous wrongs, many of them, make great pretensions to religion, and justify their conduct by extracts from the Bible!"

"The devil can quote scripture," I rejoined, smiling at his anger, "and will even point you to a declaration, that there is no God."

"Well, sometimes I think there aint," he muttered, doggedly.

Suddenly our attention was attracted by the approach of a man, to whom I attracted my unobservant companion's attention. Cale's be-clouded visage brightened at the sight of him.

"It is Perrin!" he exclaimed. "You have heard me speak of him. He has been teaching in the neighborhood, perhaps."

"See! he is waiting, and beckoning for us to hurry forward!" said I.

"There's something the matter!" remarked Cale, and increased his horse's pace from a walk to a trot.

I followed suit, leading Black Morgan. The gentleman whom we now rapidly approached, stood at

the opening conducting to the spot near the creek where we had rested in our ascent of the wooded hill, after passing the sand-barren. It was there we had scared from his forest haunt, (as the attentive reader may remember,) the young deer, which we had admired for his wild, unstudied beauty.

"Hasten!" cried Mr. Perrin. "Lu Morlis is some where hereabouts, and in danger!"

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Wright, pale with alarm, as we drove up to the spot where the dominie, clad in coarse black broadcloth and a wide brimmed palm-leaf hat, was standing.

"Lu," he replied,—“your Lu—has escaped from McClures.”

"How long ago?" inquired Cale, hastily.

"It is now four o'clock," replied Perrin, looking at a little bull's-eye silver watch, which he slipped out of his fob, "and she must have absconded while we were at dinner. (Being out gunning, I dined at McClure's to-day.)"

"How was she? Had she fully recovered?" cried Wright, anxiously.

"No; there was something wrong here," replied Perrin, putting his forefinger upon his ample forehead. "Not crazy, yet not sane: it was" said he, sadly, "more like vacuity—perhaps idiocy!"

"Was her talk incoherent?" I inquired.

"No," he replied, "she has not been heard to utter a word."

"My God! my God!" cried Cale, in great distress "what calamity worse than that?"

"Something led us to believe she had come this

way," continued Perrin, "and leaving McClure to follow me, I came hither. An hour or more ago, I saw her sitting upon the trunk of a fallen tree, not far away, on the other side of the gophers' barren."

"The very spot where she was struck by the lightning!" said I, interrupting him.

"And where her child was stricken from her by the falling tree!" cried Cale: "but go on, sir, for heaven's sake! Say, why didn't you detain her?"

"How the devil could I?" replied the unclerical parson. "As soon as she saw me, she was off like a partridge to her cover. She didn't go far, before pausing and looking back. Addressing her kindly, I besought her to come with me. She smiled and beckoned me to her, but, as soon as I attempted to approach, fled again: then stopping as before, and with the same childish smile, motioned me to come to her, yet glided away when she heard my footsteps. I followed her, a wild-goose chase, in this fashion, until I found we were approaching the creek! The wood was too thick for me to see it, but I could hear it tumbling along over the rocks, and (remembering her former attempt at suicide,) was afraid she would jump in."

"God forbid!" ejaculated Wright, drawing a long breath.

"She didn't stop again," continued Perrin, until she had reached the run and stood gazing at the water. I am no swimmer myself, you know, and if the creek were deep, how in the world could I rescue her?"

"But she did not leap in?" cried Cale; the great

beads of sweat upon his pale face, indicating that he was in an agony of suspense.

"No; I sat down on a log within sight of her, (you may see it yonder: that where the lizard is:) and pretended to be entirely at my ease, though, to tell the truth, my heart was in my mouth. Then I smiled and called to her softly to come and sit by me. She shook her head, and bending over, and inclining her ear to the water, uttered a low, musical laugh and clapped her hands, as if the sight and sound of the torrent made her glad. I had felt myself, in a former time, the almost magnetic fascination of pellucid depths of running water, and knew what an effort was necessary, in certain, cases to break the spell that would lead the earth-tired mortal to plunge in and revel in the strange, preternatural bliss that inhabits there. The impulse to rush to her rescue was almost irresistible; but knowing that the least movement in that direction would precipitate the catastrophe, I resisted the motion forward and reclined back upon the log, with my eyes closed, as if disposed for a nap. I had lain in this position, three or four minutes, seeming to me as many ages, (I could swear I was in a cold sweat all the while!) when, unable to endure the suspense any longer, I opened my eyes, and saw her stealing slyly towards me. The same instant, she appeared to be alarmed at the sight of some object on the ground, near me. Her blood-shotten eye-balls were distended, her wan face more livid than before; her muscles trembling convulsively as she shrank back a step. Then nerving herself, (I could see it in her compressed jaws and knit brow,) she knelt down cautiously, and

darting her hand to the ground at my feet, hurled something through the air, into the creek. I heard its ominous rattle as it went. Instinctively I rushed forward to see it disappear in the hurrying waters. It was a black rattlesnake, as long and nearly as large round as my arm."

The limb extended by Perrin in illustration was not that of a Hercules or a Heenan; but the comparison drew from me an expression of astonishment. Wright was more painfully affected.

"Probably the deadly reptile when it attracted her notice was lying asleep in the sun, near by me," continued Perrin. "I saw it but a moment in the water, before the strong current carried it away, down the stream. Turning to address Lu, I got only a glimpse of her flying form, disappearing up the ravine. At the same time, I heard other voices, and coming to the road, saw you approaching, which rejoiced me beyond measure; for she may listen to you, Cale, and suffer you to conduct her home. Come to the creek, and let us follow its windings! Lu dearly loves this little stream: she always did, and often, very often, rambled along its picturesque course."

"She has frequently led me along its rocky bed, but seldom so far up as this," said Wright, "but let us seek her!" -

Securing our horses to a tree, we walked with the good Mr. Perrin to the spot where Lu had cast the snake into the run. It was the same place from which we had seen the deer, the previous day; and upon looking up the wild gorge through which the creek tumbled along its noisy way, we saw the immense pro-

jecting rock on which the buck had paused to take a farewell look at us, now sustaining the fragile form of the poor demented girl: her white dress and visage contrasting strongly with the dark shadows of the sunless place and the sombre current below her; and the same smile and outstretched arm and hand beckoning her pursuers to follow.

Cale left us where we were, and went to her alone. Presently, we heard him singing a sweet, pathetic air—doubly melodious and touching amid such scenes and for such a purpose. It was a song dear to both of them, and it lured the poor wanderer to his arms again. It was not long before he came with her to us, and in a few minutes we were all mounted and on our way to McClure's.

CHAPTER XV.

THE RETURN.

THE sun was sinking into a sea of crimson splendor, behind the hills, as we walked our horses up to the front of the humble but cosy and hospitable cabin.

The good dame, received us with an anxious, wondering sort of welcome, at the door, inquired eagerly of me, though in an undertone, for little Waifwood. She need not have used the precaution of speaking aside, for Lu had fallen asleep on Cale's bosom, and scarcely waked when I took her from his arms and conveyed her into the cabin. When we had placed her upon a bed, and aroused her a little with many affectionate words, she gave us from her dark eyes such a look of utter vacuity, that it was a relief to see her close them again, and relapse into sleep.

"She is so exhausted!" said I to Cale, observing the blank despair which clouded his expressive face, and wishing to console him.

"Ay, ay, poor dear thing!" exclaimed the good old heart, our hostess, "she must have had a tremendous tramp, and I allow she was too weak to walk across the room, when she give us the slip, while husband and I, and Mr. Perrin here, was eating." Then

she had something to say about the horses, and the villain who had butchered Billy.

"Where is Mr. McClure?" inquired the dominie, "I thought he was to follow me?"

"Here he comes!" exclaimed the dame, pointing to the stalwart form of McClure walking as fast as could be expected of a man of sixty, with a stiff knee, towards his home.

Perrin and I went out to meet him, and converse a few moments before he should join the party in the house.

When two or three of his first anxious inquiries had been answered, and he had vented his indignation again upon the inhuman Wakeelah, we learnt from him that instead of following Perrin, he had gone in a different direction, under the impression, that Lu might wander homewards and lose her life in the creek.

At the crossing, where the bridge had been carried away by the freshet, he saw old Tom Wright standing on the other side of the swollen stream, afraid to trust his bulky corporation in the large dug-out which an ancient white-headed black "boy" had obtained for his use.

Upon seeing McClure, he shouted across the creek the question, when had he seen his son Cale last; remarking at the same time that he had gone in quest of a runaway girl belonging to him.—"You know her very well," he added: "it is our Lu."

"Come here, and I'll talk with yer," replied McClure; but the other exclaimed that he was too heavy for such a boat as that, and would not risk the life of Uncle John who would have to cross with him.

"I see," said McClure, "you're the same Tom Wright as ever! Wall, then, all I've got to say is, that the thunder-strike knocked your gal clean on eend, and tuck away her senses. We done what we could for her, but she never get her right mind since, and has strayed away, the Lord knows whar. Cale, he's on a hunt."

"Wall," says the old man; "you take keer on her ef yer find her, and I'll make it right with yer."

"I'll take keer o' her, and her rights," responded McClure, bluntly, "ef you Wrights 'll take keer o' yourselves!"

"That's what I told the ole skunk; I did!" said the hunter, wiping the sweat from his brow, with a calico handkerchief, "fur I knowed he was too mean to take keer o' the poor gal, his-self, ef so be he could prail on anybody else to do it fur him. And I tell yer what it is, gen'l'men, ef that yere gal don't kim round all straight in the upper story, (and he put his broad forefinger to his bald forehead,) Squire Wright 'll wash his hands o' h'er altogether; but ef so be she gits sensible and handy, he'll lay claim to her; you see ef he don't."

"Did he have any more to say?" inquired Perrin.

"No," replied McClure, "he got the two boys (Uncle John and another,) to help him onter his hoss, and rode away, without another word."

"You had better not say anything more to him on the subject, at present," said I. "Of everything else that has occurred here during the last forty-eight hours, he had better be kept in ignorance. In short, let us keep all these matters entirely to ourselves."

"A wink to a blind hoss is as good as whoa to a deaf one!" responded the old man, with a knowing look.

"Yes, let us keep our own counsel," said Mr. Perrin. "Lu is entitled to her freedom, but is, in a measure, at the mercy of old Wright. Whether she shall be set at liberty or not, is almost entirely optional with him, even though he should acknowledge the terms upon which she was transferred to him by her late father and master, Mr. Morlis; but as in her present condition, she does not recognize her dearest friends, and is totally unfit to be her own mistress, freedom would do her no good. Some wholesome restraint, upon the plantation, will be safer and best for her, perhaps."

"No, sirr!" rejoined McClure, with honest vehemence. "I can't consent to that. Poor Lu wants good nursin', kind and patient treatment, and watchful keer, sitch as parents have for their little ones. That she couldn't git from Tom Wright and his wife—"

"But Cale would see to that, sfirely!" interrupted Perrin.

"I don't know about that, and I wont risk it, no-how," replied McClure. "I don't know why Cale should have so much to do with her. In my opinion, she's none the happier for his attentions. He may be a pooty good sort o' a feller, fur all I know to the contrary; but I tell yer, I don't like the breed! And I'll look out that that poor gal yonder shant be beholden to any one on em fur a hum and good friends. My ole ooman an' I aint got nary chick nor kin ('cept a twin brother o' mine away off somewhar to sea,) an' we'd

be monsus onhuman ef we couldn't pay back some o' the many kind turns that Lu has done for us. Many an' many's the time she's fixed this poor knee fur me; and when the dame had a misery in her hand from the adder bite, and it swelled up like a puff-ball, didn't Lu bathe it, and poultice it, and nuss it, day in and day out, till it git wall? Yes, she did, though! And that don't begin! No sir; that yere aint a primin' kimpard to all she's done fur wife an' me!"

"Come, come!" cried Mrs. McClure, who now stood at the cabin door, don't stan' talkin' thar till it's pitch dark. Come in, and let a body hear what's goin' on!"

We excused ourselves to the good woman, and were glad enough to accept her invitation and enter the house.

The honest couple, it will be borne in mind, knew nothing either of Cale's love or marriage; nor did they entertain a suspicion of the paternity of the lost child. When I had disowned any relationship to Waifwood beyond that of a protector, as providentially I was for a time, they had implicitly believed what I said, but in conversation it became convenient for the old folks to call it mine; hence there were many inquiries relative to my baby.

The narration of our adventures since we left the cabin in pursuit of the horse-thief and kidnapper, interested our friends exceedingly, and when I told of the wretched fate of our darling, the little Waif of the Wood, the tender-hearted dame had to stop short in her work of getting the table ready for our supper, and sit down and weep.

McClure, beneath whose rough outside there beat a great, big heart brim-full of generous kindness, coughed and hemmed, and cleared his throat, but with all his efforts could not keep back a sympathizing tear.

"Don't cry, dame," said he; "don't cry! Major, you lost your chile, but we've recovered Lu; I've lost my hoss, but you've found yourn—"

"Is Billy dead?" I asked.

"God forgive me!" exclaimed the old hunter, starting up, "I'd forgot Billy: I must go out and see how he's doin':" and he left the cabin.

CHAPTER XVI.

NEW CHARACTERS.

I PASSED that night at Cale's house. Perhaps I ought to say his father's ; or, (for great accuracy,) his mother's, as in this family "the gray mare was the better horse."

She was a tall, spare woman in a green merino frock, a nice mob cap, and wearing on her prominent nose a pair of silver-bowed green spectacles through which her gray eyes sparkled, when she was at all excited, like gun-flint fire, ominous of an explosion. At her waist, she bore, with the dignity of St. Peter, if not with all his piety, a bunch of keys. A large and new silver watch, with seals of gold, too, purchased by her that very day from an itinerant merchant (who was still somewhere about the establishment,) ornamented the black zone which cinctured her waist. I afterwards ascertained that she was more dressed than usual, as she was to have company in the evening.

Her husband was a bulky man, and though not quite so heavy a personage as another who has darkened our story at the very portal, he might have run well (not pedestriously by any means, but politically,) for alderman. His ponderous periphery sagged down, as if "not up to its role," (as the musical critics say,)

and his large, flat face had nothing jolly in it, but was tallowy, and without other expression than that of a sort of owl-like wisdom. His diminutive nose was not much unlike the beak of that sage bird in its curve and relative proportion to the rest of the countenance. His large yellow eyes, minus the merciful veil of lashes, were surmounted by delicately pencilled brows of semi-circular form; and the pigeon-hole in his beardless face, through which his victuals entered the Mammoth Cave below, was marked at the corners with tobacco-juice, some of which had meandered down his double chin, and lost itself in a sea of white cravat and shirt frill. His dress was of coarse black woollen cloth, of the Quaker cut, and he wore a bunch of seals at his fob big enough to have served as a weapon of defence.

Cale had had a conversation with his parents in respect to Lu and her present condition, before I had the honor of an introduction to his progenitors. The parlor in which I sat, meantime, (one of four large square rooms into which the house had been divided by the most inartistic of architects,) was ceiled with Georgia pine boards, innocent of paint, and walled with the same: so we might well apply to it an English builders' phrase and call it "a box." There was a large supply of mahogany hair bottoms from the North, but in other respects the furniture was cheap and scanty. However, it was cheerfully lighted by the pitch-pine flame in the chimney place, and throwing myself into a Brobdinagian easy-chair, I surveyed at leisure a portrait of John C. Calhoun, the champion of South Carolina, and fancied it the very personification of that proud and discontented State.

When Cale returned to me, followed by his parents, I detected at a glance that their interview had not conducted in the least to soothe his ruffled spirits, but he said nothing to me, explanatory.

Upon introduction, the old obese bowed slightly and would have taken my hand, but it was intercepted by his tall wife, (whose arm being longer, and movement quicker, invariably got a like advantage of him on every occasion of the kind,) and she gave me not exactly a hearty, but quite a muscular shake, with a word of welcome. Then the adipose Squire took his turn, with awkward dignity, and, wishing me well, subsided into the easy, chair like a sinking billow into the trough of the sea.

"I've a heap of respect for ossifers of the army," said Mrs. Wright, volubly when we were all seated "and when the Squire was a member of the Legislature, I used to know a number on 'em at Milledgeville."

I discovered shortly, that the period of her husband's public duties at the State capital was one she was very fond of alluding to, and he no less proud to hear mentioned.

"It was a powerful important crisis, then, sir," said the Squire, solemnly; "a right smart chance o' public consarnment; but we saved the State, sir; we saved the State."

"Is the milingtary business as proferble as merchandising?" inquired the lady, and then, answering her own question, added, "I reckon not, because thar's no chance to speckylate. Merchandising has more money in it; but prehaps you have a finger now and

then in a Gover'munt contrack? That'll pay; that will! We done some o' that ourselves, here in the Injun nation. And now I think on't, Major, what's President Jackson going to do about the Cherokees? They'll have to go off to Arkansaw, I reckon? But they don't want to go, you know; not a bit. And they don't want to mind the State laws. The Governor's hung Geo. Tassels, (him that killed a white man you know,) but it aint scart them much arter all. Their half-breed chiefs (some on 'em monsus rich, you know,) say they are entitled to a separate, independent sovereign government, you know, with a king of their own, if they choose: right here, too: right here within the State limits. Wall, to be sure, they were here before we were, you know, and I'm not going to make a fuss about it, that is to say, as long as we kin make any more out on 'em, you know. But I mussn't stay talkin' here. You'll excuse me, Major; but my house affairs calls me away. You see our neighbors, the Morlis, are comin' in to-night, you know; or rather you don't know; but they are. Two elegant young ladies, Major, and one on 'em may set their cap for you! But I declare, I don't know but what you are a married man already?"

Closing her volley of words, with this home-thrust, she shot at me through her green spectacles a look that was like a shaft of splintered glass; but it was as an arrow against the impenetrable hide of a rhinoceros, and failed to elicit the fact that I was a bachelor: for of all the bores of mundane life to be bored for the love there is in you, I regarded as the most disagreeable.

Too much in haste to pursue her inquiry, farther, the woman of vigorous intellect, hurried out of the room, and in a few moments I heard her scolding away, now in a back room, and anon across the yard to the kitchen cabin in the rear.

Cale was evidently chagrined at his mother's peculiarities, and to spare his feelings, I talked almost as volubly as the lady had done. Presently there was an arrival of guests, and he was called to receive them.

In the meantime, the Squire questioned me cautiously to obtain my views of the position and principles of the political parties, and the impending troubles likely to arise from the defiant attitude of South Carolina, which was then ripe for her first revolt against the General Government. She had few sympathizers in Georgia, for several reasons, one of which was that President Andrew Jackson, while he resolutely condemned the former's disregard of Federal authority, was quite as decided in sustaining the State rights of the latter against the rebellious spirit of the Indian tribes which resided within her borders.

"It can't be suspicioned," said he, at last, "but what Gin'ral Jackson is a good friend to Georgy: it's monsus sartin that that's so. My old friend, Gen. Crawford, franks to me the "Globe," and I read it reg'lar. It's the president's own organ, and I see by that, now the gin'ral is determined to put down the claim of the Injuns to a separate sovrignity. I said so all along. The Injuns is staid long enough. Byme by they will be ready to fight; and I think I know what that is, sir: I think I do!"

"Then you have seen some of it?" said I, remembering the yarn told me by McClure.

"Wall, I reckon I have!" he replied, "In old Kentucky, when I was a young man; that was. I done my share of fighting, I assure yer. I was no fair weather soldier; I want. Ah, Major! the young people of the present day don't know nothin' of the hardships we, their fathers, undergone for their sake, and the blood we poured out like water, in them days!"

For all that copious waste of the vital fluid, the old fellow looked as if he had enough left.

"You ought to have heern my speech on that subject in the Legislatur, when the question of Injun removal was before the house, Major!" he continued: "it 'tracted a right-smart o' public attention. And now I want yer to tell me candid, Major, don't yer think the Southern statesmen is a heap smarter than any o' the Northern men?"

"Oh, sir," I replied, "there is no comparison."

"That's so, Major; that's so!" he rejoined complacently inserting his thumbs in the arm-holes of his waistcoat, and trying to shine through his foggy eyes. "Whether it's fightin' or speechifyin' we allers git the best on't. I don't speak o' myself purtickly, for I never were the man to brag, though prehaps I have a right to boast as much as Lumpkin or Crawford or any other man."

Fortunately for my gravity, the statesman's wife sailed in just then with two young ladies in convoy, while her son, wearing by no means the look of a gallant, brought up the rear. A freckled mulatto boy set

chairs for them, while his mistress was introducing me to their acquaintance and regard.

"Now, Cale," said that lady in a business-like way, "make yourself agreeable to Miss Sophy, and leave Miss Charlotte to the Major. Why how you blush, sir. Ha! ha! I wouldn't have thought it of an ossifer."

"Perhaps you think, madam," said I, rallying a little, "that there are no blushes in the army?"

"I presume Mrs. Wright thinks that a true soldier should be faithful to his flag, and never change his colors!" said the young lady whom they called Sophy Morlis. There was an almost general smile and titter: only the Squire did not appear to take, and his son's brain was evidently pre-occupied.

"Now sit down, and make yourselves comfortable, all on yer, wont you?" said our tall hostess. "Morris," (to the slave,) bring in more candles, and as the night's gittin' a little chilly, put on some lightwood."

"Did you say, son Caleb, that that gal—" began the squire when the boy had gone out; but his better half interrupted him with a frown, and snap of her cat-like eyes through her green glasses,—“Husband don't talk on domestic matters before company! It aint polite.” And I heard no more said about Lu till next morning.

"Squire Wright," said his wife, "I wish you'd go out and see the overseer about that corn-shuckin' to-night. Widder Morlis's niggers is come to lend a hand."

"Yes," said Charlotte Morlis, in a giggling tone, "they count on having lots of fun as well as work."

"They enjoy a corn-shucking almost as much as a dance, don't they?" I remarked.

"Yes, indeed," replied Sophy, though the question had been addressed to her sister, who sat at my elbow.

"Come, come; stir your stumps!" said Mrs. W., in an under tone to her lord and master.

"Can't yer wait a minute?" he rejoined in the same key, but rather peevishly.

She made no audible response, but turned upon his large moony face, "round as my shield," the irresistible green-glass battery, and though there was no report, I saw the flash and observed that the effect was (in naval parlance,) to bring him to. With a submissive aspect, the large man got up lazily and walked slowly out of the room.

"Now I'm goin' to leave you young folks alone a few minutes, if you'll excuse me," said the strong-minded woman, giving us one of her blandest smiles.

The young ladies tittered, evidently quite satisfied with this little piece of management, but Cale bit his lips and looked so sober that his mother rallied him upon his thoughtfulness; remarking, as she paused a moment on the door-sill and glanced back at him, "'pears ef you were in love!" I expected to see Sophy color, as I knew this was a hint at a supposed conquest of hers, but she only laughed gaily and glanced at her sister who responded with a blush and frown.

"Oho!" said I to myself, "sits the wind in that quarter?" Of course, I knew that, it made little difference to the young man which of the young ladies felt most interest in him: he was proof against the arts

of either: but I was not surprised, that the old folks should think, that Sophy the eldest and brightest of the two, had conceived a greater liking for their son than Charlotte, who conversed little with him; apparently relinquishing him with indifference to the fascinations of her more witty sister.

Sophy was not handsome like her sister, her skin was neither transparent nor smooth, and her chin and cheeks were too massive for symmetry. Her teeth, never quite concealed from view, were white and sound enough, but too prominent. Her eyes, however, were blue and sparkling under dark arching brows, and her coal black hair extended in a mass of ringlets to her well shaped neck and rather broad shoulders. Charlotte's eyes were black: with that exception she closely resembled her sister; even to her height which was medium. Both were dressed fashionably in black silk with wide flounces, and lace capes in unison, with the further embellishment of gold watches, and bracelets, and a profusion of costly rings: for who had a better right? Were they not the accomplished daughters of a Southern planter, and heiresses at that?

I scrutinized their features as closely as was possible without rudeness, and (unlike as they were to that other child of the same illustrious father,) fancied that I could occasionally detect a look in the dark eyes of Charlotte that reminded me of poor Lu. Perceiving as I talked with her, that, while endeavoring to appear not to notice the conversation of her sister with young Wright, she was in fact an attentive, though by no means a satisfied listener to Sophy's abundant exercise

of her superior colloquial powers, I took pity on her and diverted her rival's fire by making the conversation general: appealing to Cale's persistent vis-a-vis to sustain me in an opinion which I had expressed relative to the attractions of Philadelphia, where the two young ladies had been educated. This was a theme upon which Sophy soon made it apparent that she could talk by the hour together. The theatre and dramatic gossip, the notable places and the notable people, the attractive shops and shopmen, and even the confectionaries, with their invincible armada of ices, cream-cakes, soda and bon-bons—of all these she spoke with the fluency of a city miss; and it seemed as if her nimble tongue would never tire.

I was quite willing that she should do all the talking; but, if I had not been, I could not have got in more than a word, now and then, edge-wise, and the only obstruction she had to her stream of gossip, was an occasional contradiction by Charlotte who having been in Philadelphia during the same period, felt herself equally competent to pronounce an opinion upon the subjects discussed so volubly by Sophy.

Indeed I soon discovered that it was characteristic of these two young ladies to disagree upon almost every topic, and impugn each other's accuracy very often, no matter who was present: a piece of ill-breeding which I have sometimes observed in families whose education if not their good-nature ought to have taught them better. To a stranger, it must always be unpleasant.

After an hour passed in listening to the piquant exaggerations of one sister and the discontented cavil-

lings of the other, perceiving that both looked a little flushed and angered by their frequent differences (which I fancied had more acrimony than they would be willing to acknowledge) my ears were saluted by the distant sound of darkies singing, and I suggested that, as it was bright moonlight, we should all go out and see the negroes at the corn-shucking.

Cale rose from his chair with an air of relief, and Charlotte instantly imitated his example; declaring that it would suit her exactly. By her promptness, she was enabled to pair off with my friend, while Sophy nothing loth, perhaps, took my proffered arm, and we all sallied forth together.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE MORLIS FAMILY.

AFTER an hour passed in conversation, in the course of which Miss Morlis introduced the subject of slavery, and Mrs. Wright, and the young ladies both admitted that slavery was an evil which must be modified in time (say, in some future generation,) Charlotte pulled out her gold watch, and remarking that it was just nine o'clock, proposed to her sister to return home.

"Can it be so late?" exclaimed Sophy, drawing out her own time-keeper. "Oh, no; you're wrong, Lotty; it wants five minutes of it."

"I know my time is right," said her sister.

"I'm sure it's often fast!" rejoined Sophy.

"Yours is oftener, too slow!" retorted Charlotte, peevishly.

"Mr. Coote is an excellent judge of watches," said Mrs. Wright; "he sold me mine. Mr. Coote which of the young ladies has the best watch?"

The travelling merchant thus appealed to, was a youngish man, a few years older than myself: in a buckish brown suit, a high shirt collar, and a short head of yellow hair. Small cheek whiskers of the same color terminating at the corners of his mouth, (which

they seemed to march into in single file) gave him a slightly military appearance.

Putting a glass to his eye, this gentleman examined the watches in turn, and pronounced them equally valuable though not quite as accurate perhaps, as some imported by the "House" which he represented. He hoped to have the honor of showing them some before his departure for Milledgeville.

"But if these watches are both equally good, why don't they keep time equally well?" inquired Sophy.

"I will tell you," he replied, with the air of a professor. "The machinery of a skilfully manufactured watch like those of our establishment, or even like these, may be compared to that of our own bodies. Hamlet, the great master-piece of the immortal Shakespeare, signs himself in one of his letters, a machine—alluding of course to his own physical organization. So too, this little machine, the watch, may be compared to the human organism. Indeed, there is a sympathy between the two, as well as a likeness in their wonderful structure. Your own extremely fine, and remarkably delicate organization, Miss Morlis, (addressing Charlotte to whom he had been very sweet during their acquaintance of an hour,) sustains a subtle electric fluid, which not only vitalizes your own sensitive nervous system, but communicates itself to all things that feel the magnetism of your presence; even" (said he, smiling blandly, and bowing,) "your humble servant: and why should not this watch feel it also, as its mainspring being made of steel, is exceedingly susceptible to electricity? Certainly, it does. Yes, ladies and gentlemen, it is a fact no longer admitting of a

doubt—and I claim the honor of the discovery myself—the electricity in a person's system has more or less effect upon the movement of the watch he carries."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Sophy, smiling; "then the inference is, that as Lotty's goes faster than mine, it is because of her^e superior electricity?"

"Exactly so," replied Cootie.

I fancied I saw a flush, and flash, of triumph in Charlotte's cheek and eye.

"That accounts for my dulness, I presume!" said Sophy, archly.

"Exactly so!" exclaimed Charlotte laughing, for the merchant had put her into the best possible humor.

Sophy looked a little piqued, but I easily restored her self-complacency with the remark that it was well enough for witty people to call themselves dull, since nobody would believe it.

"Ah, Major!" she rejoined rising, and shaking her jewelled finger at me, "you military men are such flatterers!"

"Don't go!" exclaimed Mrs. Wright; evidently meaning "don't stay." "Caleb is the dull one, to-night; but you shall arouse him as he goes along with you, to escort you home."

"Oh no, I insist he shall not go a step!" exclaimed Sophy, who had been a little piqued at my friend's indifference to her conversation: "he is tired to death with his labors of to-day and yesterday. The Major here, I am sure, will be so kind!" and she gave me one of her most blandishing smiles.

The widow who aimed to appear as young as her daughters, and really was about as good looking, was a dressy, chatty little body, as plump as a turtle dove and almost as tender, for she kissed me almost affectionately at parting—laughing heartily, however, as she did so, and exclaiming that there was no harm in it, as she was old enough to be my mother. This seemed to be regarded as a capital joke by Coote, who stood rubbing his hands in fine glee, and wishing a like maternal treatment for himself. One thing, however, escaped his notice. Availing herself of his close proximity, the considerate mother had whispered in my ear the inquiry, "Is this a gentleman of the highest respectability?"

"I have met with him, to-night for the first time," I replied, in the same tone.

The driver of the vehicle in which I was taken to my friend's was a "boy" of sixty, a garrulous old coon, very proud of his mistress's wealth, but still prouder of his own Virginia origin, upon which he expatiated with much eloquence, clearly demonstrating, as we went along, that the negroes farther South of Mason & Dixon's line were troubled with a thickening of the scull very favorable for butting at cheeses and pine boards, (which constituted one of their innocent recreations,) but not at all conducive to intelligent attendance upon company, and the judicious grooming of valuable horses. In his private opinion, publicly expressed, the corn-meal, of which the Georgia niggers consumed so much, got into their heads and gave them hasty-pudding brains: while the Virginny colored folks, on the contrary, were given with such capacity

of imitation, that they accurately reflected all the graces and good qualities of their owners.

"At what college are your mistress's sons being educated since they left the tuition of the Rev. Mr. Perrin?"

"At the Cambridge University, sar!"

"In old Massachusetts?"

"Yes, sar! cos' um five hunderd doll's quarter dar, sar!"

"Five hundred dollars a quarter?" I exclaimed incredulously.

"Yes, sar, one hunderd for triggernometry—dat means sporting;—one hunderd for belles-lettres—dat is correspondence wid de gals, I spose,—one hunderd for natural history, dat's the study of the bars,—one hunderd for the languages dey larns ob de forrin opera singers dat lectures to de Faculty, and one hunderd for board, washin', and pew-rent."

I had to laugh. "But how do you know they spend so much money in this way?"

"Oh, I knowed it. Ole Pete aint a fool. They took me with them at first to wait upon 'em, and that was another expense. But presently de abolitionists come and bother my ole head wid dar nonsense; den massa Joe he sent me home."

Hereupon he began to hum, "carry me back to Ole Virginny," and was still at it when we reached Mr. Wright's. Giving him a quarter, I bade him good-night, and he drove off singing the same old tune.

The colored race have an inexhaustible supply of

mirthfulness, that jets forth even under depressing circumstances, and old Pete, being well treated, had little to keep his spirits down.

The family had retired to rest and I was shown to a chamber on the second floor by a slave. Before I was ready to extinguish my candle, there was a knock at my door, and I had a late caller.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DOMESTIC DISCIPLINE.

My nocturnal visitor was Cale. He was greatly excited. Making no reply to my salutation, he threw himself upon the bed, and hiding his face in the pillow, wept until he sobbed.

"Cale! Caleh!" said I, laying a hand upon his shoulder, and gently shaking it to attract his attention, which seemed swallowed up in his emotion; "what is the matter?"

Recovering his calmness with an effort, he replied, "after you left with the ladies, my mother gave vent to her displeasure against me in no measured terms. I had grievously offended her, it appears, in two particulars: first, in taking it upon myself to let Chloe see her husband, and second in suffering you and Mr. Coote, to surpass me in gallant attentions to the Miss Morlis's."

"I have told you," he continued "how much the old folks wish to unite our two families, by my marriage to either Sophy or Charlotte, and as they do not know how utterly impossible it is for me to consent to such an arrangement, they ascribe my indifference to sheer stupidity and wilful disregard of my own interests and their authority. My mother, who possesses a temper,

always strong, and at times ungovernable, instead of being propitiated by the quietness with which I received her reproaches, turned to my father, (who had just opened the bible preparatory to beginning the devotions with which they regale me every night before going to bed,) and abused him in the harshest terms for the apparent indifference with which he witnessed what she called my audacious unconcern at her resentment. Then, the old man began to echo her censure of me, and even went so far as to threaten to turn me penniless upon the world. That, you know had no terrors for me, as I am sanguine that I can sustain myself; (and what charms has home for me?) but what wounded and made me mad, was, to be treated as if I were the veriest school-boy?"

"It is a way," said I, "that some fathers and mothers have; meaning all for the best, perhaps, but determined to have their own way at any rate."

"Still," continued Cale, "I commanded my temper and made no retort. A fierce one came to my lips, but I held in. More enraged at my silence than she would have been by angry words, my mother accused me not only of contemning her authority myself, but of teaching her slaves to disregard it, and she wound up by saying that as for aunt Chloe, she should be whipped, to-morrow; even if she had to do it with her own hands. This was more than I could bear, and I exclaimed vehemently against her purpose of punishing a poor woman for an offence, not her own, but mine. "It is true," said my mother, "you deserve the lash no less than she, but Chloe shall catch it. I could skin her alive!"

"And do you believe it possible that she will fulfil her word?" said I.

"That she will whip Chloe is certain," replied Cale, "and I am powerless to prevent it! This it was, that drew tears and sobs from me, just now. They were from impotent rage and indignation, not grief, as you supposed. I love these faithful black creatures, for I have mingled much with them in their sickness and sorrows, as well as their joys, and know that they are human like ourselves, and have affections like we have; and, sometimes I am inclined to think, as much capacity for intelligence. It is true, the slave whom we call aunt Chloe is naturally of a froward and wilful temper—she is mortal like the rest of us—and the consciousness that she is about to add to the number of our slaves, and to our wealth, by the fruit of her body, has so increased her consequence in her own eyes, that I dare say she has shown it in her manner to my mother, and perhaps talked back when she was scolded. It is an infirmity which the slaves indulge in, when they think they can do it with impunity."

"It is a natural right of all mortals, and conventional regulations can't rub it out," said I.

"But shall this woman be whipped like a dog for it, and in her condition, too? I swear, if it is done, I will disown my mother and never see her more!" exclaimed Cale, rising from the bed.

"Do nothing rashly, my friend!" said I.

"I tell you," he replied impetuously, "I am tired of this infernal institution which places a class of persons so entirely at the mercy of others. I have witnessed more of these abuses than you have, Major.

Strangers know little of the domestic discipline upon the plantations. To them, slavery shows its fairest side. Look at Lu's case! Poor Lu! It is perhaps better for her that the light of her intellect was extinguished by the lightning, else her wrongs had trailed her soul daily in the dust under the feet of these devils that mock high heaven with their prayers and exhortations night and morning; as if oppression and cruelty could win the smile of God!"

"But I will intercede in behalf of aunt Chloe!" said I.

"The only advantage to be gained by that would be to defer the whipping until your departure, or during your temporary absence. My mother is not a person to be thwarted in her purpose."

"Nevertheless," I rejoined, "I will speak to her about it to-morrow morning."

"As you please," said he. "How long will you remain with us? A week, at least, I hope."

"Thank you, no, I must set out for Milledgeville on Saturday, sure."

"I wish I was going with you!" said he, musingly, and pausing at the door.

"I wish you were," I rejoined. "You need a change of air and scene. Your health is suffering here, my friend!" and laying my hand kindly upon his shoulder, I looked compassionately into his pale and haggard countenance. The ravages made there by nervous excitement and bodily fatigue both shocked and alarmed me. "Another week like this" I added, "would be the death of you."

"It is not that I fear," he replied, pressing my

hand, "so much as living to see and bear what I must if I remain here. The wreck of poor Lu is enough in itself to sear my very eyeballs. No, my friend, the grave is my only refuge. I could die cheerfully! yes, I could welcome an end to all this coil. Why should I not welcome it by my own act?"

"Because the Everlasting has set His canon against self-slaughter. Your life, my dear Cale, is not, in the truest sense, at your own disposal. Besides, suicide is unmanly: it is to evade hardships and duties which demand a higher order of courage than that which nerves the unfortunate to self-murder. I look for better things from you, my friend. Promise me, you will cast all such desperate thoughts to the dogs, henceforth and forever!"

"I will try: I will try!" said he, wringing his hands. "Good night!" and he left me.

Throwing off the oppressive feather-bed, I turned in upon the straw, and slept without waking until morning.

After a hearty breakfast of hog and hominy, with bonny-clabber and cream, as an accompaniment, I found an opportunity, while the Squire was smoking his pipe on the piazza, to speak to Mrs. Wright in favor of aunt Chloe.

"Oh, sir," she replied, "you have no idea what a self-willed mule aunt Chloe is! But really I had no intention of whipping her. I talked so, but meant nothing."

This was a great relief to me, and as soon as I had a chance I communicated it to Cale. He looked incredulous, and shook his head, but made no comment.

"Major!" presently sung out the Squire, "come and let's have a little game together."

Was it cards? I wondered: no it was marbles! The old porpus actually wanted to play at taw. Always ready for any harmless fun, I made no objection now, though I had not handled a marble for a dozen years or more.

"Do you understand it?" said I.

"I reckon I do, Major," he replied; I play some every day. When I can't git any of my neighbors or visitors to jine me in't, I make Dickey sarve."

"How under the sun," thinks I, "can he collapse that periphery of his sufficiently to allow him to pick up the marbles?" In a moment, he called to a black boy about ten years old, who, (the morning being quite balmy,) was clad in the somewhat breezy costume of a tow shirt only. "Come here, Dick, and pick up for me."

So we played together—the ex-legislator and I—upon the hard, bare earth in front of the piazza. It was to me a spectacle both novel and amusing. Talk of Napoleon gambolling on the floor with his baby! It was no more sublime a picture than this great Southern statesman, stooping to shoot at taw, and expressing in his large round face, the most intense determination to make good hits. I enjoyed it exceedingly; and thought the fifteen minutes we gave to it, worth an hour at St. Cloud.

Taw finished, the Squire proposed the less active but more thoughtful game of draughts, which, in Yankee-land, we call checkers; and we sat down to it under the acceptable shade of the piazza, where my

partner beat me the more easily, because my attention was much diverted from the board by the extraordinary gyrations of little black Dicky, who was amusing himself meanwhile by turning summersaults, cart-wheels, &c.

The Squire had just beaten the rubber game, when lo! up charges Mrs. Morlis's Peter to the door, driving proudly a beautiful pair of large cream-colored mules in front of a handsome carriage, and bearing a message from the widow and her daughters, that there had occurred an arrival at their house, which demanded the immediate presence of "de Major, and massa Cale."

We had no reasonable excuse, and as it might be regarded as uncivil to decline the proffered carriage, I prevailed upon my friend to take a seat with me, behind the complacent Peter, who then (first casting the whites of his eyes around upon the black house servants who had run out upon the piazza to admire his grandeur,) executed a sweeping flourish with his long whip, touched his hat politely to Mr. and Mrs. Wright, in illustration of his Virginia breeding, and drove away.

"Are the young ladies quite well to-day?" said I to the little but proud old "boy."

"Yes sar," he replied, "an's handsome as de 'mornin'. Dey am like two rose-buds, ready to buss open!"

"But I hope they wont," I rejoined. "And your mistress she is the lily of the valley, I suppose?"

"No, massa," replied Peter, "de good book says de lily ob de valley can't be painted: missus can be.

But I tell yer what it is, she look fuss-rate, and smell ! oh, how sweet she smell ! Nuffin but a heap o' musk."

"And who's come?" inquired Cale. "Who are the new guests, Uncle Pete?"

"Fuss and foremost, an' de bess of all," said the old boy, "dar's Miss Katey Adkins: oh, sitch a 'lishous young lady, from de bess place in all creation, and dat's Ole Virginny! (Dat's whar dey grow de rale giner-wine ladies, dat is! yer know what I tole yer lass pight, Major?) Den dar came along in de mail stage, a tall young gemman what's round collectin' money for de Baltimore folks; I disremember what am his name, but he am werry funny, and werry much ob a gemman wid his money. My golly, how fas he kin talk! I tink he say more in tree minutes dan I kin in tree hours. Fac' am, I nebber were a good han' to talk fas."

"That's because your tongue is not long enough, Uncle Pete," said I, cutting short his gabble. "You must have it stretched!"

He turned half round to us, and thrust out his organ of taste to satisfy us that it would do; then chuckling heartily at his own humor, gave his long, showy whip a grand flourish, and snap, that sent the mules on a brisk trot up to the widow's door yard.

At the same moment, a youngish man with a Roman nose, heavy black brows, and piercing eyes, drove by in a sulky; bowing to Wright as he passed. "That is Doctor Mills, a hot-headed fellow, but a good doctor," said Cale.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE LIAR.

SOPHY and Charlotte, leaving two gentlemen and a lady with whom they had been playing "the graces," on the piazza, hastened down the middle walk to meet us as we entered the gate: laughing and shouting a welcome before they reached us. The people of Georgia have a very pleasant way of doing this sort of thing. In a land where population is sparse and provisions plenty, the pleasure of seeing an arrival of guests is not chilled by an involuntary recollection of the high price of meat and potatoes.

A couple of handsome pointers came gambolling forth in front of them, apparently enjoying our coming as much as they. Indeed, it was one of those magnificent Indian summer days, which are so exhilarating to every animal nature.

By the time we had reached the piazza, the jocund little widow, herself, was there with smiling face, and extended hand to receive us.

Then we were introduced to a very fresh, rosy young lady of eighteen, with short auburn curls, a fair forehead, twinkling hazle eyes, dimpled cheeks and a Hebe-like neck rising out of a cloud of cerulean

berage frock, below which a slippered little foot peeped like a bird. This was Miss Kate Adkins.

The gentleman with whom we were then made acquainted was a Mr. Palmer, the travelling agent of a manufacturing company in Maryland. He called himself a Baltimorean, and had much of the frank, generous manner characteristic of the well-bred people of that city. In person he was not less than six feet high—one of those forms that at the meridian of life begin to grow corpulent, but at his age (twenty-two or three) are not so thick as to impair their grace and activity. He was clad fashionably in a black broad-cloth frock, pantaloons of the same, and a purple velvet vest within which shone an immaculate shirt-frill bearing a diamond pin, which he subsequently informed us had cost him five hundred dollars. A gold Maltese cross and chain overlaying his rich waistcoat, and a seal ring and diamond upon one of his little fingers, further indicated his appreciation of jewelry. He had soft chestnut locks, reaching to his coat-collar, and combed back from a well-developed forehead, exposing a pretty ear. His brows were nicely pencilled, his eyes blue, his nose and unbearded chin rather too long, his complexion somewhat tanned but smooth as a child's. His mouth was not a good one, the upper lip being too short, and rather too thin; but on the whole, he was accounted a good-looking fellow, with very popular manners—a fact of which no one seemed to be more conscious than himself.

Possibly I was a little envious, because the Baltimorean took not only the lion's share in the conversation but monopolized also the attention of the fair

Virginian. My first impression was that he had known her for a long time, for he treated her as if they had been children together: I was surprised to learn that he had never seen her before that day. However, I will say this for him, I have no idea that he had any conception of his own assurance. Certainly he was a very amusing talker, and we all laughed heartily at his droll chaff and funny allusions to his own adventures on the road.

Like all travellers, Palmer could pull a long bow, and many of his anecdotes had the largest possible amount of coloring.

Speaking of the North, (a subject suggested by Sophy's allusion to my origin,) he remarked: "I once went upon a pilgrimage—a holy palmer, you know—as far as Boston, a great city built not like Amsterdam upon piles, but on cow-paths. I'm blest if it wasn't. They have there a gilt statue of a cow, in honor of the fact, and for many years reserved a public common sacred for the use of cattle, on account of it."

"A statue of a cow!" exclaimed Miss Adkins, opening her pretty hazles in wonder, for in her simplicity she construed the facetious slander literally.

"The mother of the golden calf, perhaps?" cried Sophy, laughing.

"Pon my honor I am serious!" said the wag.

"A public common sacred to the use of cattle?" said Charlotte to Coote, who had taken a seat by her side.

"They have," said Palmer, "a stupendous veneration for old traditions and institutions, especially roosters, frogs, grasshoppers and codfish. On the top

of their principal church, where the Mayor and Council sleep every Sunday forenoon, they have mounted a golden rooster, because Paul Revere heard one crow on the morning of the 19th of April 1775, when he drove into Concord with the news of the approach of the British: on the top of Faneuil Hall, the cradle in which they rock Liberty asleep, they have a golden grasshopper, because a crop of these edible and lively insects saved the Pilgrim fathers from starving, one season, when the pumpkins-give out: and in their Hall of Representatives, they have elevated a golden cod-fish as the presiding genius of the place and a fit emblem of the source of their wealth."

This came near enough to the truth for a tolerable caricature, and I laughed heartily, while the others not understanding the points in the joke so well, looked a little mystified.

"But," said I, "where do you see, in the good people you allude to, any veneration for frogs?"

"Why sir, in the midst of their common, under the shade of a big elm, they have a frog-pond so sacred in their estimation, that they actually contemplate erecting in the centre of it, a colossal bronze statue of a frog, on a pedestal twenty feet high at a cost of ten thousand quintals of A No. 1. mackerel!"

"What an extraordinary whim!" exclaimed Miss Kate, in honest wonder.

"They are an extraordinary people," remarked Palmer, winking at me.

"I declare," said Mr. Coote, "I once visited Boston, upon a commission for our House, but all these things escaped my notice."

CHAPTER XX.

THE MURDER.

THE holy Palmer having blown his blast, treated his long tongue to a short rest. The conversation then became more general, and as Wright had gone out, under pretence of looking at the widow's wheat crop, the moment that the subject of Lu's misfortune was mentioned, it assumed a very hilarious tone as soon as that topic was dismissed, and time passed rapidly until we were called to dinner at one o'clock. It was a repast equally abundant and tasteful; only there were too many waiters. Old Pete, magnificently attired, in a white linen dress coat, white vest and highly polished top-boots, was in himself a host, and the rest were "wasteful and ridiculous excess." It always spoils my meal to have a fellow constantly watching my every motion, even to the glance of my eyes, and asking me every half minute what I will have next; but perhaps this is because I have lived in camp so much. •

Dinner over, the gay widow had some cigars brought in, and the ladies excused themselves, in order to enjoy a siesta before taking a drive.

"How could you," said I to Palmer, when they

had left the room, "run such a rig upon them in regard to Boston?"

He laughed heartily, and replied, "Oh, if we didn't talk, we shouldn't say anything. Truthful description is prosy and dull: to entertain is the point; not to instruct. If you aim to excel in conversation, Major, you must exaggerate as much as possible. Yes, sir, lay on the colors, and pile up the agony. That's the sort!"

"You would make an excellent stump-speaker!" said Cale, sarcastically.

"Thank you, my dear sir!" exclaimed Palmer, winking his eye at a glass of wine which he held up, "I may come to it. The stump is the first step to the White House."

"There is a brilliant opportunity for you in South Carolina, if a small republic will content you," said I.

"No," he replied, "I can't play second fiddle to John E. Calhoun. Like Richelieu, he is the State: when it secedes he is to be king."

"I presume," said I, "South Carolina has already voted herself out of the Union. This is the day she was to pass her Nullification act."

"She is reckoning without her host," rejoined the Baltimorean. "Old Hickory, President Jackson, will have a word to say about that."

The reader will remember that this period of our narrative was in November 1832, when the master-spirit of South Carolina, rankling with disappointed ambition and hatred of the Government of which he had been a member, had succeeded in making the people of that haughty State believe, that the Tariff and

revenue laws enacted by Congress for the protection of American manufacturing and mechanical skill, were so onerous upon the South as to justify rebellion—or as he preferred to call it, Nullification.

"It cannot be denied," said Cale, "that the South is taxed rather heavily for your factory system."

"That's a fact!" chimed in Coote, who, representing an importing house, was in favor of free trade.

"The new tariff is higher than is necessary," I remarked, "and ought to be reduced, but the remedy should be by peaceful and legal means not by rebellion. When the Hartford Convention tried to persuade New England to oppose the war of 1812, because the coast and shipping of that section would have to bear the brunt of the British hostilities, no one cried "treason," louder or more scornfully than South Carolina; and she has rung the changes upon it ever since. It furnished her crack orator, Hayne, the material for his attack upon Massachusetts, in the Senate, you remember, when Daniel Webster forever demolished his hopes of being the master speech-maker, by his eloquent refutation of the calumny. Yet, for far less cause than moved the disaffected few who met at Hartford to pass the anti-war resolutions, Calhoun, Hayne, McDuffie, and their confederates, are in favor of breaking up the Federal Union!"

"Lucifer wasn't satisfied to serve in heaven, you know, but preferred to rule in hell," said Palmer. "It's so with John C. Calhoun. He is as proud as the devil. I wonder he's content to let God rule!"

"They say," said Cale, with a sneer, "that he is a very moral, religious man!"

"He submits to God's reign, because he can't help it," I remarked: "let our President be prompt and active to suppress the threatened rebellion, as he is firm and decided in other things, and South Carolina will return to her allegiance as abruptly as she abandoned it."

"She will never submit to the present tariff," said Coote.

"Confound all free-trade notions, say I!" exclaimed Palmer; "Henry Clay is right: our manufactures and mechanics cannot compete with the poorly paid labor of Europe! They need protection, for a few years more, at least. Besides, it is the duties that support the Government."

"Let that be done by direct taxation," said Mr. Coote.

"Come, come, gentlemen, drop your politics!" cried Mrs. Morlis, as she entered the room, dressed for a ride. "The country will be safe without you, for an hour. We are going to have a drive to the Falls, and you must come along."

On the piazza, we found the young ladies, gayly rigged for the excursion, and in tip-top spirits. In front of the door-yard, under the shade of the cedars, were two carriages with a handsome team of mules to each. The disposition of the party into the two vehicles by the bustling hostess was such that while the fair Virginian fell to my lot, and Sophy and Charlotte to Messieurs Palmer and Coote, respectively, the sober-sided Cale had the pleasure of riding with the widow, herself.

The pointers accompanied us, barking and leaping

to their hearts' content. Old Pete was never prouder. He glanced around at the other driver as much as to say, "observe how I do it: mark me well, and copy after my pattern."

The drive was very agreeable. The Cherokee portion of Georgia was a rich, productive country—well-cultivated in spots by the Indians, (who were furnished with seeds and implements at the expense of the U. S. Government,) and abounded in picturesque scenery.

There are a number of beautiful waterfalls in the upper section of the State, and one of these we visited. It was not a large body of water, but fell from a height of more than five hundred feet.

Although a November day, the sun was warm, and it was a luxury to sit upon the rocks under the shade of magnolias and sycamores, and watch the cataract tumble down into the foaming water, near by us.

It must have been about four in the afternoon when our party left this picturesque spot and rode homeward: the carriage I was in leading off. We had not gone far upon the highway, before, our attention was attracted by a spectacle more common on Broadway, with its slippery pavement, than upon a country road. A horse, attached to a vehicle, lay prostrate in the way.

Upon approaching nearer, we were shocked to see the horse dying, and the body of a gentleman lying upon the ground. Springing from the carriage, I ran to his aid. Alas! it was too late: he was dead. As I turned the face of the corpse out of a pool of blood,

to examine the features, Charlotte Morlis uttered his name and swooned.

"It is Doctor Mills!" exclaimed Peter. "Somebody has killed his horse and murdered de Doctor!"

While he was yet speaking, the animal breathed its last—its death evidently caused by a loss of blood from a wound in the throat.

A rustling sound in the grove which skirted the road attracted my attention, and I saw the form of a woman glide out of sight into the wood.

Good God! was my impression right? I took it to be Lu! But no one else had seen the person, and I said nothing.

By this time our friends in the other carriage had alighted and come to the spot. I hastened to the relief of Charlotte; poor Coote, who sat on the back seat with her, being of no manner of service in this juncture, but shaking as with an ague.

Miss Adkins preserved her presence of mind, but Cale and Mrs. Morlis and Sophy, were shocked beyond measure. Palmer, on the contrary, was quite cool and volunteered to remain with the body until we could go for help. Charlotte soon recovered, but I advised, that, in consideration of her condition, she should be immediately removed from the appalling scene. This was earnestly seconded by Mr. Coote, and, as the ladies could do no good by remaining, we sent them all home, under his protection, in the carriage driven by Peter.

When they were gone, Wright and I (leaving Palmer to guard the corpse,) sprang into the other vehicle, and drove rapidly to his father's house, to ob-

tain assistance and give the alarm with a view to the pursuit of the murderer.

"Had Dr. Mills any enemy who would revenge himself by assassination?" said I, to my companion.

"No, I think not: yet it is possible," said Cale. "He was a fearless gentleman, high-spirited, rash and heady: a native of South Carolina. In his time, he has fought two or three duels. But being a frank, and independent person, very convivial and lavish of his means, he has always had a host of warm friends."

"Such men usually have bitter enemies. What man of boldly-marked character has not?" said I.

"He has openly sided with the Nullifiers' conspiracy against the Federal Government," said Wright, "and it has been reported that a lot of volunteers, in the South Carolina interest, are in the burg a few miles from here awaiting his commands as their captain; Calhoun having promised him a commission. He was of Huguenot extraction, and proud of it as Lucifer: in short a pretty correct type of South Carolina character."

"If he consorted with those conspirators, who would overturn our Government and destroy this glorious Union," said I, impetuously, "he has not died an hour too soon, though I could have wished it had been in due course of law."

"You are severe," rejoined Cale, "but the people of Georgia and Alabama would be indeed ungrateful to Gen. Jackson, if after all he is doing for them in the Indian matters, they should join this plot against him and the Federal Government."

"That's a fact," said I. But to return to the sub-

ject of Doctor Mills,—“I did not think to see if he were robbed.”

“Now I think of it,” said Cale interrupting me, “I allow I didn’t notice the gold watch-guard that he usually wore.”

“The blow upon his forehead did not appear sufficient to cause death,” I remarked.

“So it appeared to me,” rejoined my friend; “the blood came from the mouth: some internal hurt, I reckon.”

“It is a mystery to me,” I rejoined, and both relapsed into silence,—my own thoughts reverting to Lu, and internally asking the question in spite of me, “Could she in her crazed condition have perpetrated the murder?”

Presently we met two field-hands plodding along the road and talking very excitedly. “These negroes belong to Mrs. Morlis,” said my friend.

“Oh, massa Cale!” cried one, running up to us. “Dreffle times ober to your place! You better hurry home, you had.”

“What has occurred?” he inquired anxiously.

“Missus buckra Jim knock down massa Look, your oberseer, an’ Docker Mills ups an’ shoots him troo de head.”

“Doctor Mills?” I exclaimed: “how long ago?”

“Bout noon, massa!” replied the other negro, touching his old palm-leaf hat.

“An’ jus’ now,” said his companion, tree white men druv by us, fas’ as they could go, wid Jim’s brudder Sam, in a waggin, tied hand and foot.”

"Who were they? Have you any idea who the men were?" inquired Cale.

"I tink I seen um offin down dar in de willage, but I haint got no idy what dar name is," replied the fellow.

"Didn't he speak to you, as he passed, or cry for help?" I asked.

"No, massa: one ob de men were holding a pistil to his head," answered the slave.

"For mercy's sake," cried Wright to our driver, "hurry on to our plantation, as fast as possible."

We hastened on, scarcely knowing what to think of all this complication of troubles.

Arriving at the plantation, we found a crowd around the hut usually occupied by Chloe and her two children. In the midst of a crowd inside, we found the little family weeping and wailing over the body of the black husband and father, Jim, who after a few hours of unconsciousness, had just breathed his last; his bandaged head resting in the lap of Mr. Perrin.

The explanation of the scene, rendered to us by that gentleman, is reserved for another chapter.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE TRAGEDY.

"It appears," said Mr. Perrin, as he walked forth with us into the air, (of which he stood in need,) that Chloe—Jim's wife—to avoid a threatened whipping, ran into the swamp this morning but was caught by Mr. Look, and brought in, about 11 o'clock. Mistress Wright, your mother, deeply incensed against her, called to Dr. Mills, who was passing, and relating the circumstances to him, asked if it would be safe to whip her severely. His reply was that as Chloe was soon to become a mother, it might endanger the life of the child, but it would be safe to brand her on the cheek, and he recommended that it should be done immediately, not only with a view to punishment, but the better to identify her if she should succeed in making her escape at any future time. The Doctor, you know, is a very severe disciplinarian, and this morning he fully sympathised in the indignation of your mother against Chloe. He even offered to be present at the branding and, (at your father's suggestion) dress the burn. A cruel thing, sir;" he added, turning to me; "how could he have the heart to do it?"

"Go on, sir!" said Cale; his pale brow contracted and teeth grating together.

"The overseer, Mr. Look, had bound the unfortunate woman's hands and feet, and she could make no resistance except by appeals and shrieks."

"Where was the foul work done?" said Wright, in a tone of half-suppressed rage.

"In her own hut, which we have just left," was the reply..

"Who was present, besides the poor slave, and the overseer and Doctor?" asked Cale, with a look of stern anxiety.

"Your mother!"

With an expression of the most intense indignation upon his pale, distorted features, Wright exclaimed,—

"May the curse of God —" but here he paused, for with a look of earnest deprecation the parson had seized him by the arm, to stop him.

"Have you forgotten the commandment?" said Perrin, solemnly. "Honor thy father—"

"And thy mother!" said the impassioned young man, interrupting him and finishing the sentence in a tone of scornful sarcasm.

"It seems that poor Jim, the husband of Chloe, had heard of her capture and come over to intercede in her behalf. Hearing her shrieks before he arrived at her cabin, he ran in just as Look was branding her cheek with the red-hot iron. Seizing the infernal instrument under which she was writhing, Jim struck the overseer a terrible blow upon the head; felling him to the floor. The same instant, Dr. Mills who had been superintending Look's operation, drew a

pistol from his pocket and shot the unfortunate negro through the head!

"I arrived just as the Doctor emerged from the cabin, after committing this rash and bloody act. Much excited, he called to a boy, who had run to the spot, (where a number of the house servants had already collected,) to harness his horse to his sulky; for it appears that expecting to remain until afternoon, he had had the animal untackled, and turned into the acre-lot, there. The beast being a spirited, high-blooded thing, (a good deal like his master,) would not suffer the boy to catch him, which irritated Mills so much that he acted more like a madman than a sane person, and shouted to a negro to go to his sulky and fetch him his rifle. (He occasionally gets a shot at a deer or turkey, you know, in his long rides to his patients, and always has his rifle with him.) I intercepted the boy on his way back with the weapon, and unseen by the Doctor, who was swearing and shaking his fist at his horse, removed the percussion cap from the cone. Not observing but what it was all right, he put it to his shoulder, took aim at the animal, and pulled the trigger. Of course, the hammer snapped upon the bare cone and there was no explosion. With a curse, he threw the rifle upon the ground and walked up and down, so suffused by rage that I thought the blood would burst from his eyes and nostrils!

Leaping over the fence, I went into the close and was fortunate enough to catch the horse almost immediately. I led him out, and he was harnessed in two minutes to the sulky, though somewhat loth.

The rifle had been replaced, and the choleric man jumped in. No sooner was he seated, than he took up his whip and gave the animal a blow that made him rear up so high that I feared he would fall backward upon the vehicle.

"Don't strike him again, I beg of you, Doctor!" cried I! "but responding to me only with a curse, he laid on the whip again and again, utterly regardless of his own safety. The veins in the horse's face became distended and his eyes glared with rage. After rearing two or three times, however, he made a plunge forward and dashed down the road upon the run."

"I fear the Doctor will get his neck broke!" said I, to the boys who were looking on.

"He ought to, massa Perrin!" exclaimed one of them, "he's done shot buckra Jim."

"Then I learnt something of the cause of the wailing of Chloe, which now fell mournfully upon my ears. Entering the hut, I met the overseer just about to leave it, in company with your mother, who was supporting him upon her arm. From them, I received their side of the story, and the other from Chloe, when they had gone. Now, gentlemen, you know all that I do of this tragical affair. Of course I could do nothing for the recovery of poor Jim, but I stuck by him to the last, doing my best to make his condition easier and console his wretched wife and children."

When the good Perrin thus ended his narrative, we caused his tearful eyes to open wide with astonishment at our tidings of Dr. Mills's assassination.

The alarm was communicated to the Squire and his household, and soon spread in every direction. Four

negroes, with a litter, were sent in a wagon to the scene of the murder, while Perrin and the elder Wright, followed in the vehicle with me: leaving Cale, at his own request, to take care of affairs in the hut of Chloë.

We found Palmer where we had left him; but he was now surrounded by a dozen or more whites and negroes, to whom he was expatiating upon his theory of the assassination. He believed it to be the work of highwaymen—perhaps some of the Murrell gang—for the sake of the Doctor's watch and valuables, of which he had discovered that the body had been robbed.

By virtue of his commission, Squire Wright held an inquest upon the body. Upon a careful examination of the corpse, no other wound was found than the one upon the forehead, which, Perrin agreed with me in believing, was caused by the Doctor's fall forward upon the ground where he lay when I found him. The blood from the mouth, was owing, we thought to a hemorrhage. In short, but for the death of the horse, we should have no hesitancy in pronouncing the decease of Dr. Mills one of those sudden but natural visitations of Providence which often occur.

Palmer, I remember, having started the theory of murder and robbery, persisted in adhering to it; and he had the majority of the jury with him. However, as we could not agree, it was left an open question; it being decided, not to render a verdict until the following day, by which time we hoped to obtain evidence that would throw more light upon the mystery.

The body was then placed upon the litter, and borne by four negroes to the residence of the Wrights,

where it was left, for the present, in the charge of the Squire. Intelligence of the facts was next despatched to the family—the Evans's—with whom the deceased had resided since he had come from South Carolina to practice medicine in this section.

Accompanied by Perrin and Palmer, I hurried off to a village—"The Burg," it was called—three or four miles distant. As we passed, it was evident that the excitement was extending to other plantations. The whites were enraged at the death of Mills, which they believed to be the work of one or more desperate slaves. The blacks, on the other hand, were equally discontented with the homicide of Jim, and satisfied that the subsequent killing of the Doctor by the murdered negro's brother (as was now alleged,) was perfectly justifiable in the sight of God, if not of the law.

Upon arriving at The Burg we found the place in quite a hubbub. The two or three groceries and whiskey shops were crowded outside and in, by crews of half-drunken fellows, small planters, attaches of the Indian agencies, half-breed Cherokees, and "poor white men," talking boisterously, and swearing like pirates. Most of these rascals were volunteers in the company which was to have joined the Army of South Carolina, but what were they to do, now that their commander was killed? They knew only one thing as yet, and that was they would avenge his murder, the first thing. "They had got the nigger," they told us, "that done it, and the only question was whether they should do execution upon him now or wait till a bigger crowd could be collected to witness it. The judges were now talking it over."

"You talk as if he had had a trial," said I, inquiringly.

"Yes, he's been tried by Lynch law, blast his black heart!" cried one, and all the rest laughed.

"Where are the judges?" I asked, "I know something of this matter, and would like to see them."

"They're in Cobb's old shanty," was the reply, "but thar's no use o' yer tryin' to change the var-dick!"

We were shown to an old one story frame building, which was used only for the storage of whiskey. There, on two or three barrels, sat the judges in consultation. Jake Ward was one of them. A large, full-grown "likely negro," lay upon the floor, groaning under the cords by which his limbs were tightly bound as if with the purpose of torturing him. This I took to be the ill-starred Sam.

"Good day, your honors!" said Palmer as we entered; at the same time politely doffing his hat and bowing with a mock politeness which they regarded as genuine respect. "May it please the Court, we came from Mrs. Morlis, the owner of this boy."

"Yes, massa, I'm her boy; I'm Sam! De widder Morlis is my missus. I'se so glad you come!" cried the prisoner joyfully, and, bursting into tears, he cried like a child.

"Taint no use!" said one of the judges, of the Code Lynch, a thick-set, heavy featured ruffian, with a red nose and a black beard: "the widow will be paid his vally, (which aint much I reckon,) and he

must suffer the penalty. Hangin's too good for him, and he must be burned."

"He were caught in the act, Major," responded Jake Ward.

"Oh, massa, massa! It wasn't so!" exclaimed the prisoner.

"Silence!" roared Jake Ward, in a stentorian tone, and shaking his fist at the negro. "Silence, or I'll make Rome howl!"

"May it please, your worships," said Palmer, bowing again, "my theory is that the murder of Dr. Mills was succeeded by robbery, and I ask myself is the robber before me?"

"What dy'e mean?" said Jake in a sullen tone and lowering upon the speaker. As sure as I live, it struck me that the rascal looked guilty. He was put at his ease again, however, by Palmer.

"I mean to say," said the latter, "is that nigger the robber?"

"Oh no, massa, no; I neber took nothin'!" cried Sam. "I seed de Doctor's hoss down, and I went to help him. 'Fore I got to him de Doctor fell flat on to his face, and died on de spot."

"A likely story!" exclaimed the judge, who had not yet spoken; a tall, slab-sided chap, a good deal the worse for rotgut whiskey. A coarse laugh from the other two succeeded.

"Was any money or jewelry found upon this negro?" I inquired.

"This wallet was found at his feet when we took him," replied Jake Ward, handing me a little leathern pocket book, in which I found two or three medical prescriptions.

"I don't know nothin' about it," said Sam, weeping.

"Who found this?" I asked.

"I did," replied Jake, but I fancied his eyes fell before the keen, searching glance I gave him. I thought of Lu, at that moment, and ventured the inquiry, "was any other person in sight at the time you came upon Sam in that attitude? Any man, or woman?"

Two of the three replied in the negative: the other was not present at the arrest.

"And is it really your purpose, gentlemen, to burn up this valuable property?" inquired Palmer in his blandest tones. "Consider; gentlemen! it is a great waste, besides being a vile way of executing a man?"

"It shall not be done!" I exclaimed indignantly.

"De Lord bress you, massa!" cried the poor fellow, who little thought alas! how powerless I was.

"Why don't you leave him to a regular judicial trial?" said I. "Squire Wright began an inquest to-day, which he will finish to-morrow. Wait at least until the coroner's jury shall have rendered a verdict. If Sam committed the murder, (as I am confident he did not,) his motive must have been revenge, not robbery: yet the body was found robbed of both watch and money!"

"Oh," rejoined the black-whiskered man, "he was mad because Dr. Mills shot his brother."

"Poor Jimmy! my poor brudder Jimmy!" sobbed Sam "I didn't know he was kilt, massa, until dese

yere men took me up. It am de troof, so help me God!"

"I believe you, Sam," said I, "so cheer up."

Then Palmer in his off-hand, plausible manner reasoned with the three ruffians, and (winding up with an invitation to take a drink with him,) obtained their promise to stay proceedings against their prisoner until next day at noon.

After I had loosened his bonds somewhat, the men went out with us—first placing two of the outsiders into the shanty to guard the helpless negro—and having obtained the promised refreshment, bade us good-bye, with the assurance that Sam's situation should be made more comfortable, until we were all satisfied that he was guilty.

These were the best terms, that we could make for the poor fellow, and leaving a little money to be appropriated for his nourishment, we left the settlement and returned to our friends to represent how matters stood and seek means for his deliverance.

Alas! our hope was destined to be dashed by bitter disappointment. At night, a messenger whom we had despatched to The Burg returned with the horrible intelligence, that the unhappy slave had been burned alive!

The atrocious deed was executed just at sun-down, and within an hour after we left the village. The assurance which we had received from the trio had either been treacherously broken by them, or else they were over-ruled by the mob, who asserted that it was necessary to make an awful example of the murderer (as they called him,) in order to strike terror into the

hearts of all unruly negroes, and secure quiet upon the plantations.

Thus terminated a fearful but not unprecedented tragedy, through which three lives fell a sacrifice to the Moloch of slavery. I had heard of similar cases before, and have since known of instances almost or quite equal to it in atrocity, but none that came so close known to me, and thrilled me like that, to the heart's core.

Its consequences were felt long afterward. Called thence by business to another quarter, I was enabled to avoid any experience of them. Two of my friends were not so fortunate. Young Wright accused his mother of oppression, deceit and cruelty, and after a bitter altercation with her and his father, left the paternal abode, never more (as he then thought,) to return to it.

Mr. Perrin's honest indignation and bold denunciation of the diabolical execution of the slave, Sam, brought upon his head the wrath of the excited and dissolute community in which it had been committed, and he was warned to leave that neighborhood. Brave as a hero, in a good cause, (and he could never be induced to enlist in any other,) he took no notice of the threat, and abated no jot of his strictures upon the constant violations of law and decency in The Burg. The result was, that he was way-laid by a gang of the ruffians, and, after a severe beating, ignominiously treated to a coat of tar and feathers. His friends advised him to quit the place; but, until he had legal warning, he refused to do it, upon compulsion: and it was not until Squire Wright, acting under the influ-

ence of the incensed Burgers, took it upon himself in his official capacity, to put the inoffensive dominie under bonds to keep the peace, that Perrin concluded it was "no use contending against the common-whelp," and took his departure for a more civilized region.

CHAPTER XXII.

FIVE YEARS AFTER.

IN the fall of 183—, after three years in the Florida service, and one more in Washington, D. C., I had the honor of a personal interview with Gen. Jackson, preparatory to re-visiting Georgia. It was both agreeable and useful, though not of my seeking.

Conducted to his room, by his famous old porter, I found the President alone. He was habitually an early riser, and had appointed an almost ante-breakfast hour for my call.

It may be regarded as a work of supererogation to minutely describe the personal appearance and manners of Andrew Jackson. He wore no beard upon his long and corrugated face; from his narrow and wrinkled forehead, his hair (whitened as much by military exposure and public cares as by age,) rose upright and firm as if it partook of the character of the indomitable brain to which it was near neighbor. His gray eyes looked from under rather heavy but well-shaped brows, not suspiciously, for that was not natural to him, but keenly, and with an evidently intuitive appreciation of those with whom he conversed. His high-cheek bones were a little prominent, the cheeks thin, his nose good-sized and regular, his

chin rather long, and the thin lips covering closely a rather prominent mouth. In figure, he was high shouldered, tall and slim, but muscular; in speech and motion, quick, energetic and nervous; in manner frank, hearty, self-reliant and decided.

"Good morning, Major," said he extending his hand to me, without rising; "You are punctual: I like you the better for it. Sit down. Col. Williams tells me you are as familiar with the Cherokee country as any other man in the service. As a topographical engineer you can be of use to me, there. You will start to-morrow."

"To-day, if your Excellency—"

"General, you mean," said he, correcting me. "Your promptness pleases me, but I said to-morrow, and to-morrow be it. There are others not so ready as you. But no matter. I have sent for you, because it is a delicate business and I think fit to make my own suggestions, personally, to every man in the commission."

"You are very good, General," said I.

"Never mind that: this is what you are to remember," he continued, "I want the topography of the entire Cherokee country, but more especially of the mountain fastnesses in Georgia and North Carolina. It is precisely what the Indian leaders would not like to have in my possession. My treaty with John Ross their half-breed chief provides for their removal during the present year. I reckon he means to keep faith with me, for the excellent reason that he will make more money by fulfilling the contract than by breaking it."

"But if his people should refuse to go? Then I should make them, sir. It is that contingency I am preparing for. Some rascally politicians from South Carolina, and maudlin philanthropists from the North, are meddling in these Indian affairs and obstructing their removal. By the Eternal!" he exclaimed, warming up and striking his fist on the table, "I only wish I had the hanging of a few of them! They should have short shrift. However, that's my affair, not yours, Major," he added calmly, after a moment's reflection,—“what I want of you is to become one of Col Williams' corps, visit the localities, and sketch the topographical maps I am in need of. It must be done under the rose: if your mission were suspected, your sketches would be destroyed, and you, too, it may be. Entire secrecy is essential. If you were known to be in the employment of the Government, it would defeat my object. It will not do for any two of your corps to be seen together, in the Indian country. You will be an artist taking sketches of mountain scenery: you understand?"

The idea was both feasible and amusing, and I assented with a nod and a smile.

"You are pleased with my plan," said the President, "and believe you can do your part in its execution? Good! That's half the battle. Col. Williams, under whose directions you will act, will talk with you further about it. I have only to add, that the guise you assume must be consistently preserved to the end. I rely upon your discretion."

"The part is not a hard one, sir, and I will do my best."

"The best can do no more," he rejoined, rising from his seat: "and now good morning, Major!"

"Good morning, General!"

• He extended his hand and shook mine cordially, and I withdrew.

The instructions of General Jackson were executed by Col. W., and the gentlemen of our corps, in every particular; but I will speak only of my personal experience.

Mounted like a common traveller, with the addition only of my field-book and pencils, and a revolver in the breast pocket of my gray broadcloth frock, I traversed and surveyed, as thoroughly as could be done without an instrument and chain, the portion of Indian country the topography of which had been allotted to me to sketch.

The diagrams and notes thus made, furnished rather crude material for a good topographical map, but it was sufficiently accurate for the President's purpose. It had been ordered by Col. Williams, that the distances should be obtained by keeping our horses at a uniform gait and timing them—a rule which my well-trained beast, the faithful Jack, seemed to understand "like a human." Always a good walker (a great thing in a rough country,) his gait now was as regular as clock-work, and when I paused at a fork in the road, a stream, or other noteworthy place to sketch a little, he would stand, in spite of the flies, as immovable as a statue, that I might make my pencillings with facility.

It was necessarily slow work, the country being extensive. I began my task early in autumn, while the

wild scenery was yet beautiful, and did not finish it until the snow had fallen a foot deep on some of the ridges, which I traversed, in North Carolina and Georgia. On several occasions, night overtook me far distant from any human habitation, in the midst of a wilderness, in which my only guide was a pocket compass, and my only companion my faithful steed. In such cases my lodging was the cold ground, with my saddle for a pillow, and no lullaby sweeter than the sighing of the wind in the tree-tops, or the distant howling of the wolves. The danger was less than the discomfort, and that was not so much as to prevent sleep. The bears were sufficiently numerous, yet never troubled me much. One night, a huge one aroused me by poking his nose under my blanket, but as soon as he felt the cold muzzle of my revolver, notwithstanding the nature of his kind is stupid, he instinctively retired, and walked leisurely away.

The Indians whom I encountered, here and there, were mostly cultivators of the soil—an occupation in which the Government had rendered them much assistance in former years by the gift of the best kind of implements and seeds. Indian corn was their largest product, and some owned extensive fields. One of these—the property of John Ross, the half-breed chief—contained one hundred and ten acres, and had yielded that summer a crop estimated at eleven thousand bushels. With the white man's religion, the Cherokees had adopted his dress in nearly every particular; but at their festivals and dances they would don their aboriginal costume, cast the creed to the

dogs, and with the aid of paint and feathers, and the skins of animals, appear in all their primitive savagery.

Those who met, or overtook me, in my solitary surveys, or at whose cabins I lodged, expressed no interest in my occupation, and would regard me, when engaged at my work, with stolid indifference. The white squatters annoyed me occasionally by their curiosity, and, had they been Yankees, would have certainly discovered the nature of my commission, notwithstanding that I carried a few sketches, which I had made, of cataracts and other scenes of interest to an artist. A fellow of that sort, came suddenly upon me, once, as I stood at a turn in the road taking down the topography, or, to use a common phrase, "the lay of the land," and he obtained a glance at my book and pencil before I had time to thrust them in my pocket.

"Aha, stranger; now I caught yer at it!" he exclaimed, in great delight at his discovery, and chuckling shrewdly. "Now I know what yer round looking at our location for. Ye mean to bid on it at the Government sale. But I tell yer what tis, stranger, I've squatted on this yere section myself, and ef yer think to bid higher than I kin fur it, ye'll have to run it up to a right smart figur'!"

I replied, with a hearty laugh at his mistake, that I was no land speculator myself nor was I likely to bid off a dollar's worth. I had made some sketches of the scenery, but didn't care a stiver for the land.

He would not believe however, but what I was

making a survey with a view of a purchase, and as he passed on, he reiterated the remark that I would have to bid high, in order to get it. The public sale of land in that quarter occurred a few months after the arrival of troops to secure the emigration of the Indians, and such was the competition that the bids ran up as high as thirty dollars an acre. The terms of payment were, one-fourth cash down, one-fourth in three months, one-fourth in six months, and the balance in nine months; or, in default to forfeit the amount paid. There were two causes for this inflation of prices, neither of which was very creditable to the good sense of the buyers. One was, that corn commanded a dollar a bushel in the Cherokee country at that time, and the land yielded it abundantly; the other was that in some sections gold dust had been discovered. That it would yield large crops the Cherokees had abundantly demonstrated, but the bidders seem to have been blind to the fact, that the troops, whose large consumption of corn had raised and sustained the high price of food would soon be withdrawn. Nor did they appreciate the truth that even if every acre contained gold-dust, to get it might cost more than it would come to. The buyers, mostly squatters, had enough money remaining from their sales of corn to the troops, to make the first quarterly payment for the land which they had bid off, but only a few were able to meet the second demand, and the most of it reverted to the Government.

CHAPTER XXIII.

I FIND WAIFWOOD.

WHILE engaged in making my topographical notes in the mountain wilds, once the haunt of the Creek Indian and still the resort of the Cherokee, several incidents occurred, meriting a place in our narrative.

Upon a warm day in the month of October, my good steed was patiently threading his way along the tortuous windings of a water-course, when the idea occurred to me that a bath and swim would be both agreeable and salutary. Most of the streams that I have seen in the South are muddy and not at all attractive to the bather, but this glided by its rocky banks clean and invitingly. Having undressed, I plunged in, and gave chase to a large gray squirrel which was swimming across, a short distance ahead of me, to make a morning call upon one or more of her set in the beautiful oak grove opposite. She beat me, however, and attaining the farther bank, scrambled up the ledge, into the nearest tree, to take a good look at her strange pursuer.

Ascending the bank to obtain a better view of some elegant magnolia flowers, with their waxen leaves and deep green varnished rinds, I beheld a spectacle

that riveted me to the spot, and almost suspended my breath. There lay upon the brown moss, at the base of the majestic tree, a black bear, asleep, and at his side, reclining upon his huge bulk, with one little arm around his neck, a beautiful child, some four or five years old. The little curly head of the fairy-like creature rested upon the animal's shoulder, and she slumbered as luxuriously as the sultana upon her ottoman. It was a strangely interesting sight, reminding me of the Arabian story of "Beauty and the Beast," and so entranced me that for a few moments I forgot myself and everything else but it. Never in all my life, I thought, had I beheld a being so marvellously lovely. The features were as exquisite as ever limner drew, and the coloring defied Titian's cunning hand to improve it. There was intellect in the fair forehead, health in the rosy cheek and lip, and a merry elf played at the corners of her mouth, and in the dimple in her chin. She was only half clad; a coarse brown slip, or sack, affording her a scanty covering; leaving her lower limbs exposed. Her little nut-brown feet were crossed, and in one hand, resting upon her knee, she held a flower. The group, so statuesque, had no terrors for an oriole near by, and it hopped first upon bruin's head, and then plucked at a soft, chesnut ringlet of the child. They were upon one side of the tree and I upon the other, almost entirely screened by its large trunk, from their view; but awakened by the roguish little bird, the fairy thing opened her beautiful blue eyes full upon my face. Uttering a cry of terror, as if she saw an ogre, she was up and off like a flash; flying through the green wood as the hare flees from the

hunter. Her companion, the bear, followed more leisurely, ever and anon pausing, and turning as if to warn me not to follow.

When I had regained the other bank and dressed myself, I heard the voice of a woman, who was beyond view but evidently close at hand. There was a bend in the river just above my place of bathing, and mounting my nag I rode slowly in that direction, along an Indian path. In a few moments, I saw a great fat negress washing clothing upon the other side of the stream. Some years had elapsed since I last saw her but I had no difficulty in recognizing the woman of the "dark house." She was alternately singing and talking to herself.

Concealed by a clump of black-jack oaks that were more like bushes than trees, I sat at ease in my saddle and watched her for some moments. Presently an object appeared at her side, that I was satisfied was my long lost Waif of the Wood. It was the little beauty who had flown from me a few minutes before. From her earnest gesticulation, I inferred that she was relating what she had seen.

I could hardly refrain from emerging from my covert and addressing them, but prudently restrained the impulse. Shortly, the negress wrung out the clothes which she had washed in the river, and put them into a go-cart drawn by a small mule, upon the back of which the child mounted, while her unwieldy protectress clomb heavily into the vehicle. Then they disappeared in the wood; Waifwood chirruping to her donkey as they went.

Jack and I forded the stream, and quietly followed

them at a distance, unseen. When they reached their cabin, I was in the grove beyond the corn-field, and saw the woman unharness the mule, and little Waif lead him to the barn, from which I surmised rightly that, fortunately, that ugly heathen, Hoko, was not at home.

When the fairy one had followed the sooty one into the hut, I rode through the corn-field up to the door, where the first to salute me (and that in no gentle tone,) was the pet bear, which brought instantly to the entrance the beautiful child, herself; but she ran back again as quickly as she had come forth, for she was afraid of a stranger.

Five years of hard service, mostly in Florida, and a scar on my forehead, had altered my appearance materially, and I was no longer the youngster that I was when the wife of Hoko last saw me; consequently, I was not surprised that she did not recognize me, when she came forth and asked what I wanted.

"Refreshment of course, my good woman," I replied, "and here is a dollar for your trouble."

The sight of the bright coin, made her eyes shine, for specie was a rare article in the States in that period of financial derangement and crippled currency. She took it, eagerly, and in the same, soft, oleaginous, tone as formerly invited me to alight, if I would accept of such rough fare as she had to offer.—"Nuffin," she said, "but corn bread and venison, 'less I kills de rabbit."

The child, who was clinging to her skirts, looked shocked at the mention of such a sacrifice, and catching up the long-eared pet in her bosom, she stood

with tearful eyes, resting her rosy cheek against its soft skin.

"No," said I, dismounting; "your fare is good enough for me, without the rabbit. It is a pretty creature, and I would not have it harmed for the world."

The little girl's countenance brightened at this, and though she shrank back a pace as I advanced to caress her pet, she soon began to like me better. I was always fond of children, and I think she knew by intuition that I liked her. As like begets like, we shortly attained to a very friendly footing. I allowed her to lead Jack to the barn, and when the notion took her that she would like to ride instead of walking thither, I placed her upon his back; which delighted her exceedingly.

She resembled her father, in the softness of her blue eyes and the perfection of her mouth and chin, but her nose was less prominent and sharply delineated than his, and the nostrils more curved and flexible.

"What is your name, my little one?" said I to her, when we reached the barn, and she vaulted lightly to the ground.

"Why, don't you know my name?" she exclaimed; opening wide her eyes in wonder; "my name's Pic! Good horse, good horse!" said she, patting my steed on the nose, as I removed the saddle; "what's his name?"

"Jack," I replied.

"Do you think that's as pretty as Pomp? That's what we call our mule," she rejoined. "Lor suz! your horse put his nose right into my hair!" and then

the prattler laughed merrily and pressed her lips to his.

"Gracious me!" I exclaimed, as I took off the bridle; "can you kiss a horse?"

"Oh yes," she replied, leading him into a vacant stall, "he likes it."

"God bless your kind heart!" I rejoined, patting her chestnut hair, when she came out.

"Who is He?" she asked.

"Who is God?" said I: "don't you know Him?"

She shook her curly head, and replied with child-like simplicity, "I don't know anybody but mammy, and Pomp, and Growler, and Kit my rabbit, and Burrow my woodchuck, and Limp, our old gopher, and the birds and squirrels! You wont go away, will you?" she added coaxingly.

"I should not like to leave you, my little cherub!" I answered, and taking her up in my arms, gave her a good hug and a kiss, and put her down.

"Take me up again!" she exclaimed, holding up her little hands to me, and looking wishfully. Gladly complying, I carried her to the house.

"'Pears zef you two were good friends right away!" cried the negress, as she stood in the doorway. "Pio! you git down, and git me suthing to light the fire."

"You come, too!" whispered Waifwood, and kissed me. She led me to where a huge pine and a birch tree, had fallen near the cabin, since my former visit to the clearing, and tearing some pieces of bark from each, put them into my hands and went for more. "You care dat and I care dis," said she, bringing along

a little in her hands: and in this fashion we went into the cabin together. Then, my little friend, took me out to while away the time, until "mammy" should have the venison warmed up and the corn-dodger baked in the ashes.

Just then, the bear, attracted by the smell of the cooking, perhaps, left his lunch of acorns, in the wood, and came at a deliberate pace towards the hut. "Dar is old Growler!" cried Waif, and running to the animal, she seated herself upon his back and rode to the spot where I stood. Dismounting, she made him stand upright, then upon his head, and to perform a variety of tricks, to amuse me. This done, she suffered the docile beast to walk into the cabin. Then, taking my hand, she drew me, with childish earnestness, to the burrows of her woodchuck and rabbit. Calling each by its name, she showed me how tame they were. But the birds and squirrels, in the trees, appeared to be her most favored pets. To a number of these, of different kinds, she had given appellatives to which they answered. They would come, too, to her cluck or whistle, for she usually had corn or crumbs to give them, or at least a caress. Now, they were a little shy of me, but ran or hopped to Waifwood so eagerly that at one moment, while she was amusing me in this manner, she had upon each of her beautiful little shoulders a squirrel, upon her head an oriole, and in her hand a mocking bird, all of which she alternately scolded and praised, with as much unction as if they understood perfectly what she said.

"You must be quite happy here, my little angel, with all these pets."

"Oh, no, not quite," she replied, "I want another little girl. Sometimes I'm lonesome, and then mammy says ef I don't stop cryin', she'll let Bob Murrell come and take me off and sell me. So I aint all happy." Her blue eyes filled with tears as she spoke.

"Did you ever see Murrell, my dear?" I inquired, for that was the name of the kidnapper who had stolen her while an infant and brought her to this hut.

She replied in the negative, and asked me if there were any little girls where I lived: and when I told her, she wanted to know all their names, and how they looked, and if she were anything like them. There was a wishfulness in her expression as she gazed earnestly into my face, while I endeavored to satisfy her curiosity, that went to my very heart. It was a cruel thing that this interesting child should be deprived of all appropriate companionship, and brought up in utter ignorance both of God and the world beyond the wilderness in which her lot was cast. Of course, I had already resolved to get her away from there, if it were a possible thing; but to accomplish my purpose required some management. The negress had once before outwitted me: I must look out for her this time.

We were called to dinner, and as I was hungry, I found it a very palatable meal, though I admit the corn dodger was rather sodden.

The negress' tongue, made more limber, if possible, by a little lubrication from my flask of brandy, wagged freely while I was eating. Her husband, she said, had died two years before, of small-pox contracted in the

State prison at Milledgeville, where he had been confined for concealing a lot of counterfeit dollars, together with the dies for making them. But it was not his fault. The villain Murrell, the cause of all the mischief, was still in prison ; having had twenty years to serve, and she hoped his bad luck would make it his life-time.

"And how, my old girl," I inquired, "do you manage to live?"

"Poorly, massa, dat's de troof. I raises my own corn, and baccy enough to buy a little suthin' at de Deacon's store. 'Casionally I snares some small game, and now and nen a venison in a pitfall, as my ole man, Hoko, used to do when he had de rheumatiz and couldn't hunt."

"You preserve the deer meat, I suppose for winter," said I.

"Some I salted down and some I dried," she replied, "but it aint nuffin so good as hog."

"Still, you have got fat on it," I rejoined.

"Yes massa, dat's what prokes me! I bleebe, ef I had done gone an' eat dat 'ar pestle and mortar, yender, it would ha' turned to fat! But big as I is, I 'members de time when your arm could ha' gone round me slick as grease; ha-ha!"

"I suppose you were a beauty," I remarked, laughing.

"I guess I was!" she cried, shaking with mirth.

"Have you any fine views, in this neighborhood?" I inquired.

"What you say?" said she; not understanding the word.

"Have you any great sights—big rocks, high hills, falls of water, or anything worth seeing?" I added.

"Yes, a right smart chance, but nuffin worth seeing," she replied. "Dish here's de awfullest lonesomest place you eber did see. What in de worl' is yer doin' up dish way? I reckon you isn't no pedler? Dem Yankee pedlers is a hoss of 'nudder color: dey is."

"No," I replied, rising from the table, "I want to make some pictures of places about here worth seeing, that I may show them to my friends in the North."

"Kin you make a pictur' o' me, and little Pic, here?" she inquired, laughing.

"Oh, yes," said I, rising and taking my field-book and pencil. "Sit still. Stop! we'll include Growler. Make him sit in my chair." So, the bear was made to get into my seat, where he sat upon his haunches, with his nose in my plate: while the rabbit and woodchuck, each in its corner, looked wishfully on.

"Now for it!" said I, and rapidly sketched the group, until in a few moments I had made a recognizable picture, which I handed to the negress, who opened her eyes in amazement and admiration at the sight of it, crude as it was. It afforded even more pleasure to little Waifwood, and she fairly jumped up and down with delight, as she exhibited it in triumph to Growler and her other mute friends.

"Oh," she exclaimed, "come with me, this minute. I will show you such a pretty brook, and a big rock it tumbles over, and then it goes into a cave that's ever so deep and dark! But it don't stay there. Oh no,

it's too lonesome for it! so it comes out again, furdur down the hill, and leaps along in the sunshine, till I tinks I hears it laugh, jist like I do!"

"Dat ar' am your own echo, you foolish chile, you!" said the negress, who was just then passing the platter of fragments to the bear.

"Let me go with her, and see and hear for myself," said I, "and, as perhaps there are fish in the brook, I will take my tackle along."

"You two am nimble on de hoof, I 'low, but you'll find it awful up-hill work," said the negress, "I couldn't do it, ef I was to die de next minute. I'm jis' like dat ole gopher, dar! I reckon, though, I could kim down fas' 'nough, kase, he-yah! I should lay down and roll." And here her fat sides shook with laughter.

"Is it entirely safe climbing for the child?" I inquired.

"Nebber you fear for little Pic!" replied the woman: "she's as spry as a mountain cat, and beats a possum at climbin'. You'll see!"

In a few moments, we started; promising her that we would not be gone long. A rough scramble I had of it, up a hill-side almost precipitous, and obstructed with brush, scrub oaks, and loose stones, indicating the proximity of a ledge; but my charming little elf of the green-wood glided through and over it all as deftly as if there were no impediment there: and ever anon she would call back to me come on, for we were "most thar." Like nearly all Southern white children, she had the idiom which they contract by association with the household slaves, but her countenance was so beautiful, and her voice so sweet, that a charm was im-

parted even to her blemishes of speech: so I will not be at any pains to record what the reader, (neither seeing her piquant face, nor hearing her musical inflections,) would be likely to set down to the disadvantage of my little heroine.

CHAPTER XXIV.

I TURN TEACHER.

SOME minutes before I attained the height where my little conductor tarried for me, my ears were saluted with the sound of falling water, a pleasant thing always, but never more so to a man than when he is perspiring freely, as I was just then. When I got to it, the sight was a pretty one, to be sure. It was a sheet of transparent water, five or six feet wide and as many inches in depth, as it passed over a brown shaft of the ledge, from which it leaped down a distance of some eight or ten feet, and, after scurrying along for a few yards, suddenly disappeared entirely from view, beneath the shade of a sweet bay-tree, that seemed placed there on purpose to hide its retreat. A nearer view, however, revealed the "trap-door," (to use a theatrical phrase,) by which the stream made its exit. It was a slanting chasm in the ledge, made perhaps by some ante-diluvian convulsion of nature. The aperture was not broad—at most not more than six feet wide—but had a slight resemblance to a cave.

Waif, quite delighted at the interest which I took in this freak of Dame Nature, exclaimed that if I would follow her she would show me where the brook came

out of its hiding-place, "like a woodchuck do, out of its burrow."

Descending with her a short distance, around the spur, sure enough I obtained a sight of the streamlet issuing through the side-hill as quietly as if it began there.

"See!" cried my fairy guide, as we stood upon the green margin of the brook, under a beautiful myrtle tree; "what a pretty fish! It is a red-belly." Dropping my line into the water carefully, in an instant the unsuspecting swimmer darted at the fly, and the next moment lay flapping upon the green grass at our feet. It was as large as my hand, nearly oval and thin, being compressed on each side: the tail beautifully formed; the top of the head, and back, of an olive green, with russet specks; the sides of a sea green, inclining to azure, insensibly blending with the olive above, and lightening, beneath, to a pearl color, admirably strewn with minute specks of the finest green, russet and gold; the belly a bright scarlet or vermillion, from which irradiated fiery streaks up the pearly sides; the shoulder, on either side, ornamented with an oval parti-colored spot, like the iris in the long feathers of the peacock's train, encircled with a thin flame-colored membrane, and looking like a ruby. The eyes were large, and rimmed with bright red. But all this brilliancy of coloring faded perceptibly after the delighted child had taken the fish into her hands; so indispensable was its native brook to the preservation of its pristine beauty. As I observed its gay hues become duller every instant, I raised my eyes from the fish to the animated face of the child, and the thought, oo-

curred to me, if I take her hence, will she be as lovely as she is here? may not this little denizen of the brook be a type of her own lot, beautiful here, where she is to the manner born, but uncongenial and unhappy if removed beyond it? Involuntarily, I fell into a brown study, from which I was aroused by an exclamation from the object of my thoughts.

"Oh see, it begins to wag its tail! It aint dead! Goody, goody!" And she jumped up again and again, and clapped her hands with joy, as she saw the fish, which she had laid in the water while I was musing, recover its almost suspended vitality, and swim slowly away to the bottom of the brook.

"Now," said I, pretending to be sorry, "you have let my little what-do-ye-call-it get away!"

"Oh, well," she rejoined, coaxingly; taking one of my hands in both of her own, and turning her sky-blue eyes up to mine; "don't yer ky, and I'll show you where there is a great, big fish, as long as my arm; I will. But you musn't cotch Red-belly, kase I'm gwine to fotch him some crumbs: and when I throw them on the brook, he'll come up arter 'em, and nen I'll tell him I love him, and he will love me, you know: so whenever I come here, I shall have somebody to talk to, and shan't be so lonesome when you are gone!"

"You're a little angel!" I cried, taking her in my arms, and kissing her.

"What's an angel?" she asked.

"The angels dwell in heaven, commonly," I replied, smiling at her simplicity, "but you are an angel upon earth."

"Where is heaven? Where you come from?" she inquired.

"No, my little innocent; only the good are there. You will go there." I replied.

"Oh no, I can't; mammy won't let me, I reckon!" she rejoined. "Is it far away?"

"It is up there," I answered, pointing through the over-hanging boughs of the myrtle, to the cernlean canopy above.

"Oh, in the trees!" she exclaimed, "the angels live in the trees? Let me climb and see!" She would have been as good as her word, but I held her fast, and, sitting down upon a rock, took her upon my knee.

"The angels are up above the sky, my dear child."

"Is they?" she lisped, opening wide her blue eyes, "oh, now I know where the birds fly to! I've wished so many times I could fly up there with them. Sometimes, I dream I have wings and fly like they do. Is anybody up there besides the birds, and the what-er-call-ums?"

"God is there, my poor innocent," I answered. "Have you never been told who God is?" She shook her pretty head, until her chesnut curls waved from side to side; so earnest was she in her silent protestation that she had never heard who He was. She had before given me an impression that such was the case, and I thought it likely enough, for the poor child had never had any other human society; the negress seldom going beyond her own wilderness-home, and never taking her with her, when she did. The Indian,

Hoko, had been a pagan all his life, avoiding the missionaries, and despising such of the Cherokees as had become converted to christianity by their teachings. Perhaps, this was one reason why he had made his home in the deepest solitude of this mountain forest, though it may have been partly at the suggestion of Murrell, whose desperate courses sometimes rendered such an isolated and almost inaccessible retreat necessary to his safety. The widow of Hoko had never had any religious culture whatever, and though she had often witnessed her husband's blasphemous worship and offerings to propitiate the Bad Spirit, she knew nothing of the Good. Of course, then, our little Waif of the Wood had never heard aught of her maker, and the object of her existence. Yet who will say, that ignorant as she was, the blessed Savior would not have received her to his bosom had she died then, without even knowing His name?

Yet, I shuddered at the thought of leaving her in such darkness upon a subject so important to her future career, and to the development, in herself, of the highest sentiments of which the human breast is capable. In a simple way, adapted to her degree of intelligence, I began, then and there, to teach her the little I myself knew of who God was, and how kind He had been, and ever would be, to the children of men. "He is our heavenly Father," I added in conclusion, "and all the love, obedience and gratitude, my dear child, that we give to an earthly parent, and far more, are due to Him."

"Is he my ownty-donty father?" exclaimed Waifwood, changing from her look of absorbed attention,

and brightening up, "oh, I'm so glad I've got a father! But why don't he come to see me? I want to kiss him, and tell him how much I love him!"

"You can tell him so, every day you live, and as many times a day as you please, my darling. He is a spirit, and cannot be seen by you as long as you live, but when you are dead, your spirit will see him face to face."

"Nen I can love him. I can't love him if I don't see him, you know!" she rejoined.

"When I am gone from your cabin, away to my own land, and you see me no more, will you not love me?" I asked.

Her eyes filled with tears, as she exclaimed, earnestly, "oh, yes, indeed, I'll always love you dearly! You are so good to poor litt'e Pic!"

I kissed her, and said. "But God, your heavenly Father, loved you and gave himself for you before the world was. It was He that gave you life, and life to me, and life to all these birds and squirrels—

"And the fishes?" she asked, artlessly interrupting me.

"Yes," I replied, quoting from the seventh psalm, "The fish of the seas, and all that passeth through the paths of the seas."

"Goody! goody!" she exclaimed, clapping her little hands together.

"All these hills and streams, these trees and flowers, the sun, moon and stars, all were made by him. The corn would not grow unless He watered it with showers and made the sun to shine upon it, and the deer that He feeds with grass and tender shrubs and branches,

could not live unless God let them : and what would you do without corn, and fish, and venison to eat, since you have nothing else, here? so, you will understand now, it is your heavenly father that feedeth you, as well as all the fowl of the air, and beasts of the field, and when you lie down at night, and all the world is sleeping, God is watching over you, to keep you safe and let you rest well."

"I wish I could see him!" she exclaimed, half to herself.

"But you will love me, you say, when I am gone and you do not see me; then why not love God without seeing Him?" I asked; smoothing down a curl which a zephyr was endeavoring to steal away.

"Oh, I will!" she cried; a smile illuminating her lovely countenance. "And every night, when I am gwine to sleep, I'll say, 'Please God, take, care of poor Pic, and mammy, and Growler, and you, and all my pets, and all the little birds, and all the little fishes, and everything!' and when I wake up in the morning, I'll say, 'Father God, I'm very much obliged to you!'"

She looked upwards, as she uttered the last words, and in the most artless manner, bowed her head as if to Him of whom she was speaking. I could not forbear smiling, and impressing a kiss upon her fair forehead. Then I learnt her a little prayer to say at night—one which the great statesman John Quincy Adams, declared not long before his death, he had never omitted to repeat daily since he had been taught to lisp it by his pious mother: "Now I lay me down to sleep, &c."

The lesson over, I walked forth, with my jocund pupil, to the neighboring grove where the sun-light was beautifying, with fleckered sheen, verdant arcades vocal with what a quaint old author has called the "pious hymns of the feathered choirs." Presently we came to the foot of the elevation up which we had clomb the day before, and as both wished to re-visit the scene, we scrambled up again to the same height. The water of the brook after leaving the fall, passed placidly enough over a gravelly bed, in which I discovered a number of little pyramidal hills of sand, occupied by craw-fish. While we were observing the operations of these little chaps, I was surprised to see a number of beautiful gold-fish dart forward, from their hollows under the banks, and attack the little pyramids; keeping up the fight with the inhabitants, persistently, until some older and larger craw-fish emerged from the hills and drove them away; and returning to the assault again as soon as these more doughty champions disappeared.

After watching this mimic war for a few minutes, we passed on to the cave, and thence by another path in the direction of the cabin. There were several varieties of oaks, some of which were of so huge a bulk that, but for the bigger stories told of California growths, mine would appear, to many of my readers, utterly incredible. One, of a family of Titans, that I saw here could not have measured at the base less than ten feet in diametèr. The soil was of black loam enriched with the decay of leaves, for how many centuries who could tell? There were also some gum-trees of good size, but which seemed small in comparison. In the

hollow trunk of one of the latter, I discovered a swarm of bees, and I promised Waifwood, that on the morrow, she should have some honey. Then we hastened home; for the sky, so bright but a few minutes before, had become suddenly overcast. By the time we reached the door, big drops of rain began to fall and the wind soughed hoarsely through the forest.

Soon, it poured down heavily, and heaven's artillery began to flash and boom in the distance, as if the world were bombarded. The violence of the storm was spent for a few minutes upon landscape remote from us, but, after a while, it came nearer and nearer, until its full fury seemed to be just over our heads. The child had crept into my arms, pale and trembling, and with her little arms around my neck, clung closely to me, as through the open door, I surveyed the sublime strife. Accustomed as she must be to thunder and lightning, (for they accompanied almost every shower in that section of country,) I expressed surprise that my protege was so painfully affected by terror, now; but Dinah assured me, that it was always so with her. It then occurred to me, that it was in a storm like this that little Waifwood had been lost from the arms of the stricken Lu. The wild commotion of the elements upon that fearful night—when I had found her in the wilderness, had left some of its effect upon her nervous temperament.

"Don't be afraid, my precious one!" I said, "God is over all. He ruleth the storm, rude as it is, and will not suffer it to harm you, or any of us."

CHAPTER XXV.

THE ESCAPED CONVICT.

My last words were lost in a tremendous peal of thunder, accompanied by a shaft of lightning, which I distinctly saw descend in the form of a small globe of ethereal blue fire to the top of a tall pine, which, with another in close juxtaposition, stood at a little distance from the cabin. Instantly, both trees were in a blaze, and their conflagration, standing out in bold relief against the black sky, was, perhaps, the most sublime piece of fireworks that the eye ever beheld. After burning for a few moments, the fire was extinguished by a dense fall of rain, which succeeded.

Absorbed by the scene before me, I had not observed until now that the child, which I held in my arms, had swooned, and that old Dinah herself was overcome with terror.

"Oh, Lord! oh, Lord!" murmured the poor woman, (with her face hidden in her apron,) "I is a great sinner, but oh, good lordy, I nebber do so no more! no, nebber, nebber!"

"Stop your groaning, aunty," cried I, "and hold this child in your lap, till I get some water!"

Dinah uncovered her fear-stricken face, and received the child, with a bewildered look and an expression of horror, for she thought she was dead. Fetching water from the table, I applied it to the wrists and temples of Waifwood; chafing them until

she was restored to consciousness. Fainting persons, it should be borne in mind, recover soonest if kept in a horizontal position during the continuance of the syncope.

While (full of anxiety, which I would not betray,) I was thus occupied with the dear little creature, Dinah gave vent to many expressions of sorrow, mingled with much self-condemnation relative to her past course respecting the child. Finally, she voluntarily confessed, that "little Pic," as she called her, had been left with her by Murrell, and when its father and another gentleman had accidentally happened into her cabin one night, when they were in quest of the lost darling, she had kept it out of their sight, and at the break of day, gone and hid it in a hollow tree: she had brought her up by hand, her existence known only to the kidnapper and her husband.

When she had made this confession, and saw Waifwood open her eyes and recognize her, the poor old soul was greatly relieved, and forthwith began to praise God. Then I took the little one in my arms, and addressed her with some epithets of endearment, to which, after heaving a profound sigh, she responded with a shower of tears upon my shoulder.

We were in this attitude, when the door, which I had closed was pushed open from without, and we were astonished at the sight of a strangely-wild and ruffianly looking man at the threshold.

His appearance was even more forbidding than the storm at his back; his swarthy, long black-bearded face wearing a morose and ugly expression, not at all improved by his dark, matted locks, and ragged apparel.

He paused but a moment, apparently arrested by the sight of me, then casting away the half trimmed branch which he was leaning upon, tottered into the cabin and sat down. I noticed that one of his wrists was muffled in a handkerchief, as if sore or wounded.

"Don't you know me?" he asked sulkily, addressing Dinah, who was staring at him in amazement. She was speechless for the moment and made no reply. "Well, it's no wonder you can't," he continued, with a hasty glance at his own person; "I am a good deal changed: besides it is dark, here."

It did, indeed, seem as if the ruffian's appearance diminished the little light which the gloomy sky afforded. Another heavy shower was gathering, and for a few moments it was like a total eclipse of the sun. Then came, suddenly, a bright electric glare, illuminating every object without and within the cabin, and revealing distinctly the features of the intruder. But it was only for an instant, and the darkness which succeeded was made more fearful by tremendous reverberations of thunder over our heads. Poor little Waif clung to me, with her arms around my neck, evidently less fearful, now, of the storm than of the stranger, whose voice, as he broke the ominous silence that followed the thunder, made her tremble like a leaf.

"The devil himself is out, to-day, I believe!" said he, roughly. "I'm wet to the skin, and have got another chill coming on. Ugh!" (and I heard his teeth chatter,) "it is cold as Greenland. Raise a fire, Dinah, and let us have light enough to see how good-looking we all are. Come, be alive!"

The negress grumbled, but obeyed his peremptory

order with all the celerity of which her ponderous limbs were capable, and, in short order, a bright, cheerful fire of lightwood illuminated the apartment.

"Now you know me, I suppose!" said the ruffian to her, as she still knelt before the fire, close to which he had drawn his chair, and the light fell full upon him. Dinah had a very bad memory of faces, and declared she never saw him before.

"You lie," he rejoined; "but get your big carcass out of my shine! I want all of the fire to myself. Fetch more wood. I've got these cussed shakes again!" He yawned repeatedly as he spoke, and ended with a tremulous spasm. It was evident that he had the ague.

I had begun to suspect that he was one of the gang of horse-thieves and kidnappers who formerly confederated with Hoko.

"If you'll behave yourself more civilly," said I, "you might induce me to give you some medicine to stop your chill; but you act and talk as if you were master here."

"Well, who says I aint?" exclaimed the stranger, turning to me savagely.

At this, I glanced to Dinah for an explanation. She stood in the doorway between the two rooms, beckoning to me, unseen by the speaker.

"I'll see whether I have any quinine in my saddle-bags," said I to him, rising.

"If you're a doctor, of course you have!" he rejoined curtly.

"Good!" thinks I to myself; "he takes me for a physician: I'll play the part of one!"

"You may leave that young-one with me while you

go and get it," said he, extending his hands. "No! no!" ejaculated little Waif, clinging to my neck almost convulsively.

"I allow I have the best right to her," murmured the man, but a hard shake seizing him just then, he dropped the subject and I took the troubled child with me into the other room. Dinah whispered to me, when I had entered "Dat's Murrell, sure's you is born!"

"I suspected so," I replied, in an undertone, "but how in the world could he have got out of prison?"

"Broke out, I reckon," she answered; "he allers bragged dat dar want any bar, or chain, or stone wall, could holt him in!"

I had in my saddle-bags, besides calomel, quinine and laudanum, (three articles of the *Materia Medica* almost indispensable to a traveller in the wilderness either south or west,) a box of opium pills, and I resolved, that, in case of necessity, I would put our dangerous visitor under their soothing influence: in the meantime I would salivate him.

Instructing the negress to address me as Doctor, I carried my medicines into the kitchen, where the ruffian was shaking all over in his seat at the chimney, and biting the hardest kind of oaths in two with his chattering teeth. Indeed, swearing seemed to be the extent of his physical ability, just then, and that, together with his shaking, was all that he could do: so utterly prostrate was he by fatigue and ague. In truth, there is nothing that will take the vim out of a man, (no matter how energetic or vigorous he may be,) like a good, rousing "chill."

"Swallow these pills!" said I.

"What is it?" he asked, taking one with a tremulous hand.

I replied that it was quinine; and so it was. Swallowing it, he took up the other, and asked, "And this?"

"An opiate," said I.

"I can sleep without it," he rejoined, yawning repeatedly. "A devil of a tramp I've had of it for the last five days! However, here she goes!" he added, dropping it down his throat. "I would swallow all the medicine in your saddle-bags, if it would cure me of this infernal ague. That was opium, doctor, I know it by the taste. Here, you old nigger, put more wood on this fire!"

"Yes, massa Murrell!" said Dinah in her softest tone, and hastened to obey him.

"Oh you know me, now, do you?" he exclaimed, calling her at the same time by a vile name. "You've been letting my little girl get sick have you? Maybe, you thought I'd never be back to call you to account for it!" But here he was again seized and shaken too violently, by the retributive ague, to allow him to proceed, or he would have again addressed the recoiling child, to whom he had turned as the fit took him.

The ruffian had a hard time of it for about half an hour, during which his sufferings were such as to cause me to relent from my cruel purpose of punishing him by salivation. It is the custom of some tamers of wild beasts to extract the teeth of the animals: the free use of calomel would have been equivalent to the like dental operation in Murrell's case; and if the loss

of his grinders would have deprived him of his capacity for crime, perhaps I should not have hesitated to give him as large a dose of mercury as I have seen administered by southern physicians to their unfortunate patients; but it would not have answered that purpose, and though, by lodging a subtle poison in all his bones, to rack his system continually and render the remainder of his life a burden, might serve in some sort the ends of justice, I had not the heart to give it to him.

My humanity, however, did not lead me to sympathize so much with his nature as to forget the claims of my own; and accordingly I suggested to our hostess the propriety of getting us, who were well, something to eat, for it was long past dinner time.

It may excite the sneers of some people who shall read this confession of my mindfulness of the wants of my own stomach when that of my patient was evidently in need of immediate repairs; but I assure all such carpers that the most distinguished physicians never allow themselves to go hungry; and I never knew a doctor, (even in a consultation case, where death itself was impending,) to decline "refreshments."

I offer this remark not so much in extenuation of my own appetite, (which, with me is a "regular faculty,") as for the benefit of the members of the medical profession, who, while they have fewer invitations to partake of refection than any other class of public men, often stand most in need of it; especially in obstetrical cases. To enlarge upon the "alimentiveness" of their assistants, the nurses, would be wasteful and ridiculous excess.

Perhaps I did wrong: all men are fallable, and the best err sometimes. Be that as it may, I sat down to dinner: leaving my patient to shake by himself. And as a collation is a pleasant thing to wind up with, it shall serve as the conclusion of this chapter. ✓

CHAPTER XXVI.

MURRELL, THE OUTLAW.

WHEN Waifwood and I had finished our frugal repast, Murrell, whose ague was intermittent, had begun to feel much better, and he "allowed" he would take a bite himself. I had no objection to his biting himself provided it did not strengthen him to bite others, but I took the liberty to give him a professional caution to confine himself to tea and toast—neither of which, by the way, were obtainable at any price. Alleging, after the manner of "vagrom men," that he had not eaten a morsel since the day before, he flouted my suggestion, and swore as he sat down to table with Dinah that he would eat everything in the cabin: whereupon, little Waif looked alarmed again, and unobserved by the ogre (as she evidently regarded him,) went and hid her rabbit in the other room.

"You have great faith in your digestive powers," I remarked.

"After the cursed bad fare that I've had for the last few years, I have reason to!" he exclaimed, laughing hideously. "I believe I could digest a joiner's hammer and box of nails!" and with another shout of mirthfulness, he thrust a huge bit of venison into his

black-muzzled mouth, and masticated it voraciously for a few moments, then gulped it down, anaconda-wise. But what would have been wise enough in that Brobdinagian kind of snake, perhaps, (as the wisdom of the serpent, you know, is proverbial,) was very rash in a person waiting for another chill, and I ventured to suggest to the hirsute feeder, that if he bolted his food in that way, subject as he was to congestion, I would not insure his life for forty-eight hours.

"Well, nobody asked you, to! I'm all right. A man that is born to be hung wont die of congestion in the stomach!" he exclaimed, emphasizing the last word, and laughing boisterously, as he called upon Dinah to fetch on some whiskey. She replied, in her most lubricated tone, for she was terribly afraid of the monster, that she had not seen any spirits since Hoko went away.

"I believe you lie, old greasy!" he cried; continuing to cram down the meat and bread, and to grow more light-headed every moment. "If I thought you did," said he, seizing the carving-knife, and scowling like a thunder-cloud, "I'd —"

"No, no, no! massa—massa—massa! it am de troof!" cried the poor soul, in an ecstasy of fear.

"Ha, ha, ha!" pealed the ruffian, "I was only going to cut me another hunk of meat, not half as fat as you are, my old beauty; I wish it was!" and suiting the action to the word, he helped himself to a soldier's slice of the dried venison.

Either amused at her own mistake, or for the purpose of conciliating her dangerous guest, Dinah laughed at his Orson-like jocularly, and seemed to

enjoy the remarkably elevated spirits to which he had attained.

"What's the news, doctor?" asked Murrell, who now began to rattle on, from one topic to another: doing all the talking himself. It was evident, that what with the intoxicating influence of the opium, and the feverish condition of his system, his mind was disordered. "I've been a good deal confined of late, (and here he winked at Dinah, and adjusted the dirty muffler which concealed one of his wrists.) How's the Calhoun party, and Nullification, now? Old Hickory spoilt a pretty kettle of fish, when he put that down, and I lost my chance of promotion. The fact is, the people wan't prepared for it; more's the pity." He now began to curse the abolitionists, and after airing his vocabulary at their expense, proceeded to say, that there was no security now for property of any kind, but more especially that which had legs to it. A good deal of trouble, the philosophizing rascal said, arose from the immigration of foreigners; the thoughts of which made him swear again. "What's the use of our supporting all the thieves and paupers of Europe? They don't come down here; of course they don't; but they populate the North and make it sassy. We'll have to go up and lick 'em out one o' these days, and all the abolitionists. It wouldn't take long, I reckon; for one Southerner is equal to a whole regiment of such fellers. We have a confounded sight smarter men down South than any in New York; and we're a set of — fools, that we don't take the management of the country entirely into our own hands, or else saw off from the Union and build up a grand em-

pire this side of Mason & Dixon's Line, and make Calhoun king, and Bob Hayne prime-minister. Then there would be a chance for a bold, dashing dare-devil like me. Blast your republic! it's all moonshine. We want a stronger government, and an order of nobility. That's what every chivalric soul pants for. The old days of the barons and knights, with their retainers, serfs and tournaments; that's the talk. Let the North weave and spin and do all the menial work, and hoard up dirty dollars, but we will be brave cavaliers on the land, or admirals with a free-trade flag at sea, capturing their well-laden ships at will, and building palaces upon our broad savannahs, and glorious hills, with the prize-money. I could make a fortune in that way, with a good boat upon the Mississippi; but how I would like to command a ship, that should skim every sea, and levy tribute upon every craft afloat! Ha, ha! your corsair is your true king after all!" And here he sung a stave of a pirate song.

"That might do better," said I, "if there were no such troublesome things as hangmen and prisons."

"Hangmen be —," exclaimed the demented ruffian, with an oath; "and as for prisons, do you think they can build them strong enough to hold me? Answer me that!"

I opined that I thought such a thing possible.

"No I'll be — if it is!" he almost shrieked. "See here!" and tearing off the handkerchief, he held up in triumph a wrist encircled with an iron ring, and then, raising a leg of his trousers, exposed a similar one upon his ankle, "There's all that's left of manacles

stronger than ever bound to his cursed dungeon the famous prison-breaker, Baron Trenck, but they couldn't hold me. Ha, ha, ha!" he laughed scornfully; "they thought they had me, forever and a day, but I gave them the slip, and now I'm free, free, again! Jake Ward, will never have this bird in his cage again."

"Jake Ward?" I exclaimed; the name reviving old reminiscences: "what had he to do with it?"

"He was the turnkey," replied Murrell; "he got the berth two years ago, and now tyrannizes over better men than himself, if they are convicts. They'll kill him some day, if the law don't hang him first. Those who gave him the place, because he could influence many votes, knew very well that he ought to have his neck stretched, for there was found in his possession a rifle belonging to a man in your line of business who was murdered some years ago about twenty miles from here: a Dr. Mills."

"I heard of it at the time, and always thought that Ward knew more about it than he would like to have known. He swore it on to a poor slave, who was burnt alive in consequence. It was another crime added to a long catalogue."

"Yes," rejoined Murrell, "but he has a jewel of a daughter. Ry Ward helped me to escape. You may stare, doctor, but I'll be — if she didn't; and if ever I get into smooth sailing again, she shall become Mrs. Murrell No. 3. [The other two have resigned, you know: ha, ha, ha!] You see, when the old hound, her father, got so drunk that he couldn't fetch me my bread and water, I should have starved if she hadn't taken the keys and brought me the food herself. I

always had a taking way with me, and I reckon she took a fancy to me. In fact, she confessed as much, though I wasn't much better looking then than I am now, for I hadn't shaved since I had been in limbo. I made free to give her a buss and a good hug, and that bound her to me in chains stronger than my own gyves; that is, the bonds of Cupid—Ha, ha, ha!" And the escaped convict treated us to a fragment of a song to the god of love.

I confess that I was more sorry than surprised that my Diana, the huntress, had given her sympathies, and perhaps her honor, to this wretch. I inquired in what manner she had aided him.

"She lent me a case knife, and left the doors unlocked behind her when she went away. All I had to do was to hack the knife a little, and then saw my chain in two, where it was the weakest. I wore out the tool before I had finished, however, and had to do the rest by main strength. The rings on my wrist and ankle, I had to bear away with me, but not being vain of such ornaments, I concealed them from observation. Fortunately, the night was dark, and I scaled the yard in safety: then says I, ho! for sweet, sweet liberty! and broke like a quarter-nag for the green wood—as dear to me, then, as ever it was to the bold Robin-Hood. Never slept better than I did that night on the bare earth, under a tree! But I had no time to lose. They would scour the country to find me. So I was up with the lark, and on my way to find this place, if I could: but what with detours to avoid observation and losing my way, I have been six days in the woods with such precarious support from

nature as I could pick up ; which as I had no weapons has been slim enough. In short, I have been about starved, and, worse than all, brought on these blasted chills again. But blow the odds ! I'm all right now." Then he sang a verse :—

"Whilst we're young, we should be gay,
For what's the use of sighing, &c."

"You are merry !" said I.

"Oh yes," he rejoined, "I can be merry and social like other people, if I am Murrell, the desperado. My friendship is not to be despised, and any more than my hate and revenge. That I never forgive an injury, that child yonder is an evidence ; so, doctor, I count upon your friendship and assistance. There's my hand !" he exclaimed, seizing mine too suddenly for me to prevent him, and slapping his own into it, "we'll be sworn friends ; till death do us part, as lovers say."

"You alluded to the child," said I, withdrawing my hand from his hold, and glancing at the little trembler, who sat as far away as she could from the object of her dread : "what has she to do with any revenge of yours ?"

"Ha !" he exclaimed, seized with a sudden caprice of suspicion, and eyeing me askance from under his heavy, black brows, "you would betray me ! No, I will be the master of my own secrets." After which, he became in turn reserved, silent, moody, and stupid ; and, at length, leaned his forehead upon the table and fell into a sound sleep.

It was night when he awoke, perfectly delirious and in a high fever. Death seemed to be at hand, when

the morning dawned. I should have done the world a service, and saved myself and others much trouble, then and subsequently, if I had let the disease terminate at that time the mortal career of the villain; but humanity, or, perhaps, a higher inspiration, prevailed, and I did my best to avert the catastrophe. His disease was congestive fever, and having no other at hand, I followed the practice of the quacks of the country, and gave him a dose of calomel. It saved his life, but he continued dangerously ill, and out of his head for a week, during which he once talked as if addressing Cale Wright—reminding him of the ill-usage at McClure's, afterwards revenged by the kidnapping of his child, whom he, Murrell, now had in his power, body and soul, either to rear for his own vile uses, or to sell to the highest bidder.

How could I watch longer at the bed-side of this wretch, after hearing this revelation of his diabolical purpose? It was with some difficulty, I confess, that I chained myself to the ungrateful task. Still, when I reflected how unfit this man was to die, and how certain would be his condemnation in the world to come, I believed it to be my duty to save him for a tardy, but not too late, repentance.

On the morning of the fourth day after his arrival, he obtained some sleep; the first that he had had for forty-eight hours. It was uneasy in the highest degree, but a change for the better was evident in the great beads of perspiration that started from his frowning forehead, and dripped from his shaggy eye-brows. It was the first moisture that I had seen upon his fevered skin since he entered the cabin, so wet, on the

day of the storm. Manifestly, his mind was greatly exercised in his slumber, for he groaned and tossed about and clenched his long finger-nails into his hands until the blood followed. Suddenly, he awoke, shaking with terror, but recognizing me at once.

"Doctor, is that you? Where am I?" he gasped in an agony of fear, and glancing around, as if for some object he dreaded, yet must see. "Was it only a dream? Don't leave me alone for an instant! I dreamt I was dead and in hell! And there I saw and was confronted by every one that I had had a hand in sending there, and every one of the dead who, in their life-time I had deceived or injured. Each in turn laid bare the blackness of my heart, detailed the wrongs I had done him, and followed me wherever I went, with reviling and curses. Some of these had not known in their life-time of the wrong I had done them, but in hell all the crimes of this world are revealed. And these fiends were to follow me, with their maledictions, through all eternity! In vain I turned from them: at every hand I was encountered by familiar faces, demoniacal with rage and hate. I fled; oh, my God, with what fear and speed! Terror seemed to lend me wings. Suddenly my progress was arrested by a woman's form, and in tones of scorn and fury, she pronounced my name. It was Rose Eldon, whom I had betrayed and murdered!"

"Murdered?" I gasped, in horror; and recoiling from him.

"She fell by her own hand, but I was no less her murderer for that," replied the miserable man. "It was my neglect and cruelty that drove her to it. She

died cursing, yet with words of love for me upon her lips; but now she has nothing for me but reproaches and even blows. 'So you've come at last! Ha, ha!' she fiercely cried. 'See where the knife entered my heart, and sent me hither, to dwell in misery! I should have been happy but for you. I was bad, but might have repented and been forgiven. It's all your work.' And then she cursed and struck me; then mocked with derisive pity, and clasped me in her loathsome embrace. It was horrible! I tore myself away from her, and fled, shrieking. She followed, screeching with her infernal laughter; and, joined by the rest of the hateful spirits, hunted me like a hound! The excess of my terror awoke me. Thank God! thank God! it was only a dream. I will repent: I will no longer be what I have been. Henceforth, I will live quite a different life!"

"If God spares you," said I.

"And don't you think he will?" he asked, fixing his glassy, sunken black eyes upon me.

"I will not deceive you," I replied: "it is possible that you may survive two days."

"No more?" he cried, with an expression of dismay upon his haggard countenance; "oh, doctor," he added, imploringly, "save me! save my life, and I will be your slave! You are a good, humane man; you have skill and experience; and can cure me. Don't despair as I do! Don't give up trying. I am not fit to die, now: I must have time for repentance! Dinah get me a drink of cold water."

When the appalled negress had gone out after a fresh supply from the well, he said to me, "Keep her

out of the room, and I will confess to you, doctor all the crimes of which I have been guilty. It is a long list!"

"Make your confession to God," I replied; "for He alone can blot out your transgressions."

"That's the talk!" he exclaimed: "that's what I want. Oh, doctor, I have been a great sinner, but I never had any one to care for me. You had a good mother, perhaps.—"

"I had, indeed!" I replied.

"Mine either deserted me when I was an infant, or I was stolen by the Indians. It was said, that I had Indian blood in me. My earliest recollection does not remind me of a single white face. I remember a cross old squaw toting me about upon her back as her papoose. That was in Kentucky. I know I should have made a better man, if I had had as good training as white boys usually, but when I grew to associate with any of these, it was only with the worst, for I was stigmatized as half-breed. At an early age, I became a cook-boy on a flat-boat upon the Ohio, and before I was fourteen had joined a gang of river thieves."

He continued his account of himself, from first to last, and a dark, eventful crime-stained narrative it was!

It is not indispensable to our history that it should contain the details of his. Enough of the worse traits of human character have already been given, to sadden our pages; and much more of the same sombre tone, I cannot avoid rendering, if I would be faithful to duty, and consistent with the plan of this work. Let the considerate reader forego, then, any interest he may feel in the narrative which the penitent outlaw gave me of his previous experiences.

Suffice it to say, that he evinced great contrition for his crimes, as well as the most intense alarm lest he should die unpardoned. Rejoiced at his repentance, I did my best not only to show him how to make his peace with God, but to render him happy in his new faith. In this christian labor, my mother's bible was very serviceable; but I confess that I was ashamed that I had not studied its inspired pages sufficiently to refer to, and quote familiarly, many texts and passages, exceedingly applicable to his past career and present situation. However, I read a great deal to him from the Word, and reasoned with his doubts and fears, to the best of my ability. I was but a poor botch at such work, however, as the result proved.

The negress was also an interested listener, and sometimes little Waifwood would linger, when she had occasion to enter the room, notwithstanding that she could not approach his bed-side without a nervous tremor, nor feel without a shudder his attenuated fingers caressing her beautiful hair.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"THE DEVIL A MONK WOULD BE."

I FELT towards the contrite man, a certain sort of tender interest, ("your churchman dearly loves a proselyte;") and did my best to help him physically, as well as otherwise. His fever had taken a favorable aspect upon his sweating so freely and recovering his reason, but his tongue and lips now began to be so swollen and sore from salivation, that he could not talk without pain, and, though my topographical duties called me elsewhere, I would not leave him until I had put him in a fair way to recover from that trouble. He professed, and felt I believe, much gratitude both to God and to me, the humble instrument of his restoration, and declared, in a sort of religious ecstasy, that he had no wish to go into the world again, but was content to pass the remainder of his allotted span in that secluded place, in prayer and meditation. When I told him, that the anchorite's isolation and penance were not the most acceptable devotion in the sight of God, he replied, that the world was no place for him: it had branded him as a felon, and his re-appearance would be the signal for persecution; and it would never give him any peace as

long as he lived in it. There was some truth in this, and I made no further opposition to his plan.

"Thank God," thinks I to myself, "for this wonderful conversion! How happy ought I to be that I have been instrumental in it!" Likely enough, I had a little spiritual pride in the matter. It is a common weakness of christians, and a certain kind of vanity was not among the least of my foibles.

I drew a rose-colored picture, in my own mind of this intelligent and pious though once wicked person, dividing his days between holy meditation, and the cultivation of the little clearing: gunning and fishing a little, occasionally, it may be, to vary his frugal fare, or patiently teaching his faithful attendant, the negress, the way of life: and so growing to a ripe old age, a hoary hermit with long white beard and venerable aspect, famous, the country round, for his unaffected piety and devotion.

But I had now become impatient to resume my field-book and continue my topographical memoranda. From what I had already seen of the country in the vicinity of the cabin, I was satisfied, that, should the Cherokees see fit to resist the Government's arrangement for their emigration, hereabouts were some of the almost inaccessible retreats and fastnesses to which they could safely retire, and defy an army to follow. It was possible, nay even convenient, for me to make an excursion to those localities in the morning and return to the cabin at night; and, in this way, employ myself each day, for a week or more, to advantage in pushing my crude surveys.

Murrell, confined to the bed which I had relin-

quished to him, since the commencement of his sickness, was still too self-engrossed to give any thought to my employment of time beyond what applied to himself; and he appeared to be entirely satisfied when I told him, that, as I needed recreation, I would pass a few days in scientific explorations in the adjacent hills, and endeavor to spend my nights, as long as it was practicable, in the cabin.

"Oh, let me go along!" pleaded Waifwood, in a whisper, to me as she stood by my seat, with her little dimpled hand resting upon my arm: and she glanced timidly at the sick man, as if he were still repulsive to her.

I patted her glossy head, but made no reply. She followed me, when I left the room, and without seeming to hear his call to her to remain, joined me in front of the cabin, and taking both my hands, with the most persuasive expression and accent, begged me not to leave her in the house with that bad man.

She had overheard him confess that, disguised as Wakeelah, he had stolen her from her father, but I think that her fear of him arose less from that fact than from a certain instinctive repulsion—an antagonism between the natures of the two persons—which she would have experienced in his presence, even if she had never known or seen any evil in him. Repellent individuieties are not uncommon, though instances so strong as this are rare.

I endeavored to dispel her fear; telling her that formerly he had wronged her grievously, it was true, and he had been a very bad man, but now he was very sorry for all his wickedness, and as God had for-

given him, she ought to, also; for was it not one of the appeals in the Lord's prayer, (which she now knew by heart, in another and better sense than the common acceptation of the phrase,) "forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us?"

"I can't love him," she rejoined, "and I have tried not to be afraid of him, but I am. His sharp, black eyes hurt me. I tremble so, when he turns them to me, or touches me with his hand! Please don't leave me here! It is such a pretty morning, I want to go with you. Do let me go! I could show you such a lot of nice places, you know!"

A pang shot through my heart, as I observed the nervous mental suffering of the little one, and opposing her desire no longer, I told her to fetch Jack from his range and we would ride away, together. With a cry of joy, she kissed my hand and hugged it for a moment with both her own to her beautiful neck; then tripped away, as light as a fairy, to a spot on the verge of the clearing, where the animal was feeding upon wild grass that grew luxuriantly beneath the spectre-like forms of a grove of pines, which, the former master of the cabin had killed by girdling. The gentle horse, if he had had the power, might have welcomed the child, with the words of the song, "All things love thee; so do I!" Certainly, his kindly whinner and manner as he drew nigh to her in response to her call, said as much. A like¹ feeling animated his companion, the donkey, as he clearly evinced by sundry motions with his long ears, and a most resonant bray; but the wiry grass was too agreeable to his palate to allow him to

leave it, and after a long salutatory look at his little mistress, he resumed his feeding.

Jack accompanying Waifwood to the barn with entire docility, I put on his saddle and bridle, (she, meanwhile, trying to make herself very useful in buckling the straps,) and we were soon ready for our ride. She had never been used to a bonnet, and as my operations were likely to be confined to the wooded section where the sun's rays were not powerful enough to render it desirable, she was mounted in front of me, without one, and bidding good morning to the smiling Dinah, who blocked the door-way with her huge corporation, to see us off, we rode away across the clearing.

Waifwood had not neglected to feed her pets, and to enjoin upon them all (Growler included,) to be good children while she was gone; and as she emphasized her address to the happy family with her pretty little forefinger, and promised them, moreover, that if they minded her, she would bring them all something very nice when she came back, it is fair to suppose that for one day, at least, their deportment was a model for their species.

When we entered the wood, my little beauty was jubilant with animal spirits. Indeed, so was I, for I was always cheerful, and usually quite buoyant; and such was the exhilarating influence of the atmosphere in that elevated region of country, and the sweet smell of the woods, which rang too with the melody of birds, that it was next to impossible to be otherwise than merry, especially within hearing of the amusing chatter of my pleasant companion. Nor was my horse less

gratified than his burden. It had now been nearly a week since I was on his back, and he was glad to resume the service again, and travel.

I had already sketched the road from the river, to the by-way, and thence to the cabin. The paths of the Indians usually followed the water-courses, and, as a rule I had confined my notes to them, but now I resolved to depart from it, and pierce as far as practicable to the more inaccessible retreats to which even the red men themselves seldom penetrated, because among hills not commonly offering sufficient inducement for any one, but a fugitive, to make the laborious ascent. The Cherokees, I know, rarely took the trouble, and if the aborigines (which they and the still more warlike Creek Indians had either exterminated or expelled more than a century ago, from that quarter of the country,) had ever frequented that wild and rugged mount, no evidence of the fact remained. In other solitudes, not far distant, I had met with tumuli, in which were human bones, Indian weapons, utensils &c., and curious mounds composed entirely of stones; the work of the red men before the present race, now about to be expelled in their turn, (this was in 1836) had come and slain them all, or driven them from their verdant savannahs and sublime forests, never more to return.

Certainly, it was from no lack of material that the mounds of stones, which I had seen in the lower country, had not been built here. Rock abounded, denuded of soil, and, in many places, a good deal shingled. We dismounted at a spot where the way was blocked by huge masses of granite, and securing Jack to a

tree, pursued our exploration on foot, as best we could.

There were innumerable shrubs and varieties of flowers that we had never seen before, growing in clefts of the ledges, or in the little soil which, here and there, sustained stunted oaks and birches. We saw many curious forms in rock, resembling an easy chair, a table, the human head, or figure of a quadruped couchant, &c. &c., and now and then my light-footed pioneer would call my attention to some miniature cave which she had discovered. All these things, afforded Waifwood a world of entertainment, immeasurably enhanced by finding them herself, and pointing them out to me, which she did with gay alacrity and numberless exclamations to arrest my attention or express her delight. At length, we attained an open space upon the height, commanding a magnificent panoramic view of a large area of the surrounding country; woodland and rich savannahs, interspersed with rivers, and the corn and bean and cotton fields of the Indians and squatters, and, beyond, a circle of hills, rising like an amphitheatre from the vale to the blue canopy arching from the zenith just enough to shut them in. Then such glorious coloring, and blending of light and shade!

I paused to sketch a little, and we sat down together upon a boulder, for both were somewhat tired with clambering. The rough outline done, I produced our luncheon from the wallet which I had slung over my shoulder, and the child went with my tin cup, and held it against a big rock from a cleft in which a little thread of cold, sparkling water ran. The cool moor.

tain air was invigorating and our appetite first-best, and, humble as was the food, prince never feasted better.

"Don't you think Jack would like some, too?" suggested my little trencher-mate, who never had an enjoyment herself that she did not wish others to share, "I think he must be hungry. I'm little, and I'm hungry; he is so much larger than I and you, I 'spects he must be very, very hungry, indeed!"

"Bless you, my darling!" I rejoined, smoothing down her silken locks with which the breeze was playing, "you are a good girl to think so much of the dumb animals. We will go to him presently, but let us sit awhile and admire this grand scenery. Come, you shall point out to me anything pretty that you see in this landscape."

She responded, pointing, as she spoke, to what is sometimes called a mackerel sky. "That's the prettiest. It is like ever so many white rabbits, with yellow tips to their ears; aint it?"

"The sun, which they partly hide, gilds their points with his rays, my dear," I replied. "Now they grow larger, and, with their white fleece, resemble a flock of sheep and lambs."

"Wont you mark them on your picture?" she asked.

"They have made their appearance since I drew the sketch," I replied, "and by the time that I take up my book and pencil, they will take other forms. In that respect, they are very much like the Dutchman's pig."

"Oh, tell me about that!" cried Waifwood, eagerly.

"He had some swine, and a litter of young ones. Being asked how many he had, he said he couldn't tell: he had counted them, all except one, but that one was such a lively little pig he wouldn't stay still long enough to be counted!"

This joke was just as good as new to Waifwood, and after a merry laugh, she expressed an ardent desire to be the possessor of just such a pig for herself.

"Now look at the sky again," said I. "You see that the little clouds have joined together, many of them."

"Yes, and now they are like a herd of black and white cattle; but there is one," she cried, pointing toward the zenith, "as large as our cabin, see! see! there is a door to it, where the sun shines in, just like it do at home! Oh, aint it pretty?"

"The light behind it is making it a house of gold, half covered with roses in full-bloom," I replied, humoring her fancy.

"Yes," she exclaimed, "and the cows and sheep are coming home to the house!"

"And we had better hurry home to ours, I suspect, if we don't want to get a ducking," said I.

The gold, orange, deep rich blue and violet colors, and the many pleasing shapes, which the clouds had assumed, were soon merged in one dark heavy mass, which quickly extended around nearly the whole arch, without shutting out the meridian sun and the blue sky immediately over our heads. Then it began to rain far away, upon woods and intervals much lower down than where we stood. To retrace our steps,

would have been to seek the shower, the fall of which upon the forest sounded like the tramp of an invading army of cavalry. But there was artillery along, for we heard the echoes of its cannonade rumbling among the hills and timber. The effect of all this, to us who stood in the genial sunshine, above it all, was both singular and sublime.

Waifwood clinging to me for a moment, in fear of the thunder, I pointed to the blue sky over our heads, and re-assured her. Then her thoughts recurred to Jack, whom we had left secured to a tree, but the shower passed so rapidly and disappeared, that she was made easy on that point also.

We sat down again, to wait for the sunshine to dry the wet woods through which we were to return, and taking my little book from my pocket, I gave her another lesson in reading, in which I had taught her somewhat already.

"What nice finger-nails you have!" said Waifwood, taking one of my hands. "Mine are not half so pretty a color. See, how dark mine are!"

It was true; they were so. It was the only trace that I ever discovered reminding me of her ill-starred mother's mixed blood. Poor Lu! I had often thought of her during the past five years, and still more since my arrival at the cabin.

Once, a letter from Rev. Mr. Perrin, and, again, a few irregular lines in a large, rough hand, from McClure, gave me a little information concerning her.

Generally regarded as insane as well as dumb, Lu was held in great respect by the Indians, who encountered her sometimes in her solitary rambles along

the banks of the wild mountain torrent, to which they had given the name of "The Mad Woman's Creek."

It had already become a rather embarrassing question with me what disposition I should make of Waifwood after my removal of her from the care of the negress. The most convenient place for the present, and, on some accounts, the most genial, would be the home of the McClures, who I felt assured would be well-disposed to receive the little stranger, (of whose real origin they would know nothing;) but then arose the objection, their cabin was the asylum of poor Lu. Of course, it could serve no good end to have her maternal relationship to Waifwood known, nor was it probable that in her condition of mind she would herself discover it: still there was a chance, that, what has been called, "the unerring instinct of nature" would betray to her the presence of her child; and the bare possibility of such a thing inclined me to leave the little girl with the woman who had reared her, until I should have finished my service in the Cherokee country and gone into winter quarters.

With his conversion, Murrell had abandoned, of course, his former evil purpose of selling the little girl into slavery when she had become enough grown to command a large price, and she could reside, I thought, as safely in the cabin as elsewhere. So I argued, but it availed nothing as long as Waifwood held her former enemy in such dislike and fear: hence, I was again in doubt as to what was best to do in the case. This thought led me to reflection, in which I indulged freely while following Waifwood down the mountain.

Presently, my little pioneer turned and shouted

that there Jack was, and, in a few moments afterward, we came to the spot where he was whinnying his joy at our approach, which was not the less satisfactory to him for being followed by a bait of fat oats from one of my saddle-bags.

We reached home without meeting with any incident worthy of mention, in season for an early supper, to which old Dinah welcomed us with right good-will.

Subsequently, Waifwood accompanied me almost daily, and a fortnight passed usefully as well as pleasantly enough. All went quietly along until circumstances occurred, that materially altered the face of affairs in our household, and led to a catastrophe which I will now relate.

While I was engaged, from day to day, in adding to my stock of field notes, and taking the lay of the land and the course of the waters in all that neighborhood, the invalid in the cabin had been constantly improving in health, and as he had taken care to shave himself, he looked quite like another man. As he became stronger, confinement grew more irksome to him, and, as little as I saw of him, I observed a decline in his spirituality, and that he was weary and discontented ; but I was not aware of the full extent of his dissaffection until the time in question.

Murrell had never appeared pleased with Waifwood's partiality for me, especially as it heightened by contrast her dislike for him ; and, as, on account of some slight illness, she remained at home that day, he thought it no more than right that she should make herself more agreeable to him than common. I learnt from Dinah, subsequently, that the sensitive child

would neither walk nor play with him; pleading an excuse that she did not feel well.

Offended by her shyness, Murrell began to scold, and she to cry, until Dinah took her part, when he became very angry, and telling the child that he was her master, threatened that if she did not come and kiss him and say she was sorry, he would take her away that very night and sell her to a slave-driver. Her shower of tears—for she wept bitterly at this—instead of moving him to pity, only made him the more angry, and he attempted to lay hold of her. Eluding his clutch with a shriek of terror, the poor little thing fled from the cabin to the woods, in the direction which I and Jack had taken, when we left in the morning.

Murrell would have pursued her, had not the four-legged beast, Growler, taken a formidable attitude in the door-way and intercepted his passage. Struck by the ludicrousness of this unexpected opposition, the villain laughed boisterously, and, telling the negress that his threats were only in fun, resumed his seat, where he soon fell into a brown study. The bear, squatting upon its haunches, near the door, glowered upon him for a time with a black, phosphorescent glare, then dropped its chin upon its fore-paws, and went to sleep with one eye open.

Hours passed, and still the child had not re-appeared at the cabin. Both Dinah and her guest supposed that she had found me, and would return with me to the cabin about the usual time. After dinner, Murrell amused himself with trying on two or three disguises which, in former years he had kept in this place of

refuge, for use in an emergency or when expediency dictated. Among these was the Indian dress furnished him by his confederate, the late husband of the negroess, and in this costume I found him, when I surprised the occupants of the cabin by returning towards evening without Waifwood.

When I learnt enough of the facts to infer the rest, I was both alarmed and angry : anxious for the safety of the child, and mad with the cause of her flight. After censuring him severely, (for I am naturally of a hasty temper,) I re-mounted my horse to go in quest of her. As soon as my back was turned upon him, the treacherous villain, smarting beneath my rebuke, took up the old rifle and primed it from a horn of powder that hung from a beam close at hand.

The first notice that I had of his hostile intention was his address to me, delivered with a sardonic smile upon his countenance, as he raised the rifle and brought it to his shoulder,—“Doctor, get off that horse!”

“For what reason?” I demanded, quite taken aback with surprise.

“Because I want it,” he replied. “I have got tired of stopping here, and have concluded to set out upon my travels.”

“And you would steal my horse!” said I.

“I shall appropriate it. Stealing is not a polite word. In fact, I borrow it. It is like a forced loan by a repudiating state,” he rejoined.

“But where, now, are your religious professions and solemn vows?” I asked indignantly.

“I have backslidden,” he replied, laughing.

"And why was that?" I inquired.

"It was so easy!" he answered.

"Wretched man," I rejoined, "you are like the dog that returns—"

"I know the text," he shouted, interrupting me.

"But you know the old song:—

'When the devil was sick,
The devil a monk would be;
But when the devil got well,
The devil a monk was he!'

Knowing well the foul condition of the weapon he held, and which I had omitted to clean, I put spurs to my horse, and started off at a dashing rate. I heard the discharge of the gun, but was unharmed. Not so the traitor who had fired it.

The gun had kicked him; in its recoil dealing him a severe blow upon the head, and apparently stunning him. Indignant at his treachery and base ingratitude, I had quickly dismounted with the purpose of thrashing him, if I could. As I approached, I saw where the breech of the weapon had knocked back the mass of hair from his temple and exposed the scarred remains of the ear which McClure had shot off, five years before, in the flight of the villain with the stolen child and horse.

He was still reeling under the effect of the recoil, and I could not strike him in that condition. Handing the fallen piece to the frightened negress, I told her to fetch the fellow some water. The rascal was not so much stunned as he had pretended, and taking advantage of my turn to Dinah, he suddenly sprang

upon my horse, and shouting, with a laugh of triumph, "Remember Wakeelah!" attempted to ride off. But Jack remembered Wakeelah, too, and had no notion of having him take any more liberties with him. Elephants are said to have a wonderfully retentive memory of abuse, and my horse resembled them in this respect. He needed no system of mnemotechny to aid his recollection of his strange rider. Perhaps the sight of the Indian dress may have had its effect, but I think it was instinct that caused him to refuse to budge more than a few yards. Then he stood stock still, which gave me an opportunity to spring upon Murrell and pull him down from the saddle. He struggled in my grasp, and, frightened at the tussle, the horse ran, dragging the kidnapper by the foot which had got caught in the stirrup. More scared now than before, the animal made a break for the woods, hauling the luckless villain over the ground at a rough rate, until he reached the timber, where the first tree he passed received an indentation from Murrell's head and disengaged him from the stirrup.

Freed from his hated rider, Jack recovered his equanimity, and, giving the lifeless wretch a wide berth, came trotting back to me with a whinner intended to express, perhaps, his satisfaction at the result. Without any further loss of time, I mounted him and rode away in quest of poor little Waifwood: leaving the ruffian to his chances.

It was then nearly dark and the child had been gone seven or eight hours. What could have become of her? If she had followed the path, and road, to the river, had she attempted to cross it? The stream,

subject to considerable changes, had been very low of late, so that, at the ford, the water was not knee-deep when I crossed it in the morning; but it was rapid and had force enough to carry the little one down. My only hope against such a catastrophe was her familiarity with the river, in which I knew she had often waded and bathed. My day's work had been on the line of the river, above the ford, but of that she had not been aware. If she had crossed the run, it was probable that she had pursued her flight by the road on the other side, leading by the deserted cabin once the residence of Jake Ward; a long distance even for a man to walk in one day, and how could I expect she would reach that shelter by night? It did occur to me, however, that if she had continued her way in that direction, instead of dropping with fatigue before reaching it, I should find her under that roof. It was a faint hope, but I clutched at it and clung to it, despite the greater probability, that, overcome by exhaustion, she might have stepped aside from the road a little, and sat down to rest and so while she was sleeping I should pass by, unconscious of her proximity, and lose her.

Perplexed by these hopes and fears, I hurried forward, straining my eyes as long as a ray of day-light remained, to catch, if I could, a glimpse of the fugitive in the woods on either side of me as I passed. By the time I had reached the river, I was very anxious to know whether she had crossed it safely, and, dismounting, I examined the soft moist earth at the margin to discover her tracks. They were there, sure enough, and getting into the saddle again, I walked

Jack through the shallow stream. I ought to have rode out, above or below the landing so as not to disturb any footprints she might have left on that bank, which would have assured me she had reached it, but I was so much engaged endeavoring to see into the water, that I neglected that precaution. It was too dark to discover any track, and it was only by feeling over the surface with my hand in quest of small footprints, that I discovered any, and those were either too large or evidently those of quadrupeds &c.

While I am pushing on through the dark wood, in the direction of Ward's, the reader shall follow the little fugitive, and learn all that happened to her.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A SPECIAL PROVIDENCE.

ALMOST frightened out of her wits by the brutal threat and attempt of Murrell to seize her, the child fled like a hare through the woods, not pausing or looking back but confident that her enemy was following her, until, catching her naked foot in a brier vine, she fell, exhausted and bleeding, upon the ground, where she lay panting and in momentary expectation of being in the clutches of Murrell, like a little sparrow in the talons of a hawk. Discovering after a few moments of distressing suspense, that her pursuer was no where in sight, she asked God to take her safely to me, and rising from her knees went on at a more moderate pace, yet rapidly, until she came to the river. She was a little afraid to cross it, but did so, and felt refreshed. Seeing the road, when she ascended the bank, she supposed I had gone that way, and she went on, until quite tired, she sat down to rest and cry a little. Then she fell asleep and the sun was down when she awoke. She felt much better, and thought that perhaps I might be near at hand, though unseen, as I had told her God was, and she called my name many times, until she thought to herself that perhaps the bad man

might hear her: perhaps he had heard her: perhaps he was coming. He would see her, in the road; she would seek the cover of the bushes. Leaving the path and running deeper into the woods, she scared up a flock of turkeys, the noise of whose wings through the brush sounded to her like the coming of a pursuer, and again, full of terror, she darted forward, not knowing nor thinking where she was going; intent only upon escaping from that dreadful man who wanted to catch her and sell her into slavery. The scraggy brushwood that bruised her flesh and the thorns that tore her tender skin, all were unheeded in this, her run for dear life and liberty. Presently, she felt the ground give way under her feet, and in a moment more was up to her arm-pits beneath the surface, and still sinking into the treacherous quagmire. "Oh, Father, God!" she cried, "if you are near, come help your little girl!" A broken branch of a tree lay near her, and her seizing on this was all that saved her. Then she shouted my name many times, but only the echoes of the swamp responded with their mocking repetitions. The darkness gradually descended, and when the poor child saw the stars come out one by one, and look down upon her, she wondered if they were angels' eyes come to watch over her—angels who would pluck her out of the bog and bear her up to that beautiful sky when she was dead. "Oh, come and take poor little Pic, now; wont you?" she cried, addressing them. "Oh, dear Father in heaven, your little girl wants you very bad. Don't you see, I can't get out?"

Overcome by fatigue and hunger, exhausted na-

ture could sustain itself no longer, and before she had finished her little prayer, "Now I lay me down to sleep, &c." her eye-lids drooped and she lost all consciousness in a slumber that even the mosquitoes could not break. So she passed the night, and in the morning awoke with no succor near. A supplication to God for help followed, and again she shouted my name as loud as she could, but was too faint and weary to repeat it.

There were two large black birds upon an old, dry tree. They kept eyeing her, until it made her nervous. She told them she wished they would go away, but they hopped down from one limb to another, nearer and nearer to her, as if they were waiting for her to die. These creatures were buzzards, and doubtless they expected to pick poor little Waifwood's bones.

The pangs of hunger now began to distress her, and she made another effort to extricate herself, for she thought if she could only get out she should be able to find something in the woods that she could eat; but the quagmire held her in as with the power of suction. "Please, somebody, give a poor little girl some breakfast!" she murmured. There was no response, but the two great, black, ugly looking carrion birds swooped down on to the bog within two or three yards of her, and regarded her patiently with their dull, heavy eyes, as much as to say, "We bide our time."

She tried to scare them away, but they replied only by a stupid stare, and drawing in their bare necks, rested their heads upon their breasts, and continued to watch and wait.

"Oh dear, oh dear," she sobbed, "will God let his little girl die here, and never, never, let her see her friends any more? Our Father who art in heaven, do be good to poor little Pic, and send somebody to help her!"

A voice, (she said, afterwards, in relating her adventure,) seemed to say to her, "Cry out for help, and keep shouting as long and as loud as ever you can," and she did so, till the swamp echoed again. When her voice was no longer audible, she heard the crackling of the dry bushes, as of footsteps approaching, and it made her heart leap within her.

She strained her eyes in her effort to descry the approaching object. It might be a wild animal: perhaps it was old Growler, hunting for his little mistress: perhaps it was the good doctor: and alas! was it not more likely to be her enemy, the treacherous guest? That fear held her tongue, when she was tempted to renew her cries. Better die there, than fall into the hands of that bad man.

But no; it was neither of the objects suggested. A woman soon emerged from the thicket, and Waifwood cried out for joy. "Oh, do come and help me out!" she exclaimed, and then, she said, it seemed as if she could not breathe again, nor see anything; but all grew dark and she thought she was dying. I presume she swooned away. She remembered nothing that happened until she awoke as from a bad dream, and found herself lying upon the green bank of a stream of water, and an unknown woman, with clasped hands and long, dishevelled hair, crouched upon the grass at her feet, regarding her with a kind yet strange

expression, as if she were herself bewildered at the sight of her.

At first, the little girl thought it must be an angel, and maybe this was heaven; and she asked the good being if it were so. But the woman made no answer, though she pressed her hands upon her forehead and looked as if she wanted to speak.

Poor Lu! She had never uttered a word since her power of speech was paralyzed by the shock which had so nearly deprived her of life, five years before. It was rarely that any human being elicited any notice from her, and only instinct could cause her to feel more interest in this child than in any other. The mountain torrent had been, during the interval of her imbecility, the only object of her love, but now she regarded wistfully the little creature whom she had rescued from the bog and brought to her favorite haunt; and when Waifwood said "I'm so dry! Please, marm, give me some drink!" she took her in her arms tenderly and bore her to the edge of the water. Kneeling down, and stooping over till her lips touched the surface of the clear, cold stream, the child drank her fill, and then asked for a piece of bread, or something else to eat, for she was very hungry. At which, the woman smiled and motioning her to remain (where she lay almost too weak to rise,) darted up the bank and into the wood. She returned in a few moments with her hands full of Indian plums, and these the child ate: then fell asleep.

When she awoke, the woman had her head in her lap and was caressing her hair. As she uttered no word in reply to her questions, and looked strangely,

notwithstanding her kindness, Waifwood began to regard her timidly and beg that she would find me.

Poor Lu's supine mental capacity was inadequate to comprehend the child, though she pressed her long lean fingers hard upon her temples and gazed at her earnestly, as if trying to understand. Suddenly, as if an idea had occurred to her, she smiled vivaciously and taking Waifwood in her arms, eagerly, hurried with her along the margin of the creek, to a wild, picturesque spot, where the stream, wider and more shallow, coursed over a bed of dark sand. Seating the child upon the shore, she then went down to some rocks close to the water, and from a hiding place under one of them took a small glass bottle and brought it, with a triumphant expression to Waifwood. It was half full of little yellow flakes no bigger than the scales of gold-fish, whose color they resembled as she poured some of them into the little hands which the child placed together to receive them.

In this attitude, I found these two persons, so closely related, yet ignorant of the tie invisibly connecting them. Lu, startled at my approach, hastily concealed her treasure, and motioned me away imperiously; but Waifwood uttered a cry of joy, and casting what she held in her hands upon the rock where she had been sitting, tottered forward to my open arms. With a shower of mingled tears and kisses, she clung around my neck, while with my own eyes suffused with grateful moisture, I hugged her to my glad heart. Of course we had much to say. Meantime the mother regarded this fond meeting with jealousy and displeasure. Evidently she regarded me

as an intruder ; but after gazing upon us for a few moments, she turned sullenly to the rock, and began to gather up the yellow scales and miniature yellow pebbles which the child had carelessly thrown down. They were little flakes, and nuggets of pure gold, which the half-idiotic woman had found from time to time in the bed of the creek, and (prizing them as children do pretty shells and pebbles gathered upon a sea-beach,) had hoarded them carefully, and kept them in a snug hiding-place, safe from any depredating hand. Gold had been found in the beds of several of the creeks, as well as in the quartz rock, of the Cherokee country, and at that time there were two or three gold-mining companies in North Carolina and Georgia, (though it was not, in the unsystematic and improvident manner in which they conducted it, a lucrative investment,) but I confess it had never occurred to me before, that the Mad Woman's Creek, in its rush from the mountain, washed down such "golden sand."

"You are faint with fatigue and hunger, my dear child !" said I, "Sit with this good creature, until I find some nourishment for you in my saddle-bag. I have a friend, not far from here, with whom this woman lives when she is at home. When you have broken your long fast, we will go thither."

Jack stood near by, and, placing Waifwood in the lap of Lu, whose grateful expression rewarded me for the act, I got for her the remains of my yesterday's lunch and a crisp corn-cake which I had obtained from the table of a Cherokee under whose roof, (the cabin tenanted, at an earlier period of our narrative by Jake

Ward and his interesting family,) I had lodged and eaten a hearty though frugal breakfast. As I have before confessed to an unfailing alimentitiveness even under the most trying circumstances, the magnanimous reader will not do me the injustice to doubt the sincerity of the solicitude then weighing upon my mind in regard to my protege. The fact is, I was ever of a hopeful disposition, and as I had always fancied that I could descry through the most gloomy vista, and the longest of the dark alleys of life, an illuminated transparent lantern bearing the encouraging motto "Never Despair," so, now, anxious as I was about the lost child, something whispered to me, that I should find her in the morning. Fortunately, the night was bland and clear. I thanked God with all my heart that it was so. Healthy, as Waifwood was, she might have perished if one of the heavy storms, common to that country, had prevailed.

"Oh, dear!" cried the eager little feeder, "this tastes so good! Wont you have a bite?" and she put a morsel of it to the mouth of the poor soul, who still holding her in her lap, was gazing upon her with that same wistful expression in her large, dark eyes. The proffered morsel was received and eaten, which made the child's eyes sparkle with pleasure, and she repeated the expression with like success, for though she had had food in the morning at McClure's, Lu's long ramble, which had providentially led her to the succor of her unknown child, had given her an appetite. It may damage the romance to mention the fact, but it was so, and a very pleasant sight it was to me, who like to see people eating, to witness the satisfaction of

these two creatures, (so tenderly allied yet so long separated and still estranged,) as they shared the slight and homely repast.

In the meantime, Waifwood related to me, somewhat disjointedly, the cause of her running away and her adventures subsequently.

"And wasn't God real good," said she, in conclusion, "when I prayed to Him to please let somebody come and help poor little Pic, to send this kind woman? Why don't she speak to me? I was frightened at her sometimes, she looked so, out of her eyes, and made such motions, and tried to speak and couldn't."

"She is dumb," I replied. "Her name is Lu: she lives a few miles from here. Her head is not well, and she does not understand."

At this, the mother nodded her head, probably in recognition of her name, as she repeated the motion when I said, "your name is Lu: you live at Major McClure's?"

"In a great storm, five years ago," I added, addressing Waifwood, "this poor creature was struck by lightning, and so badly hurt that she could neither move nor speak. It was a terrible night for her!"

Lu covered her wan face with her hands and pressed her forehead as I spoke.

"And didn't she die?" asked Waifwood with a trembling lip and faltering accent.

"She recovered after a while the use of her limbs," I replied, "but her head never became all right again, and I have been told that she has never been able to speak a single word from that time to this."

Lu shook her head, slowly and sorrowfully, but smiled when the little one with a sympathizing expression, took away her attenuated hands from her face, and kissed her; then hugged Waifwood convulsively to her bosom and wept.

From that time forth, she never willingly released the child from her care. Upon starting to proceed with them to McClure's, I would have taken Waifwood in front of me, but it was only by using considerable persuasion that I prevailed upon the mother to yield her to me, and when she had done so, after some mute expostulation, she walked by the side of the horse with her hand upon the little girl's lap, as if the better to maintain her new-born interest in the precious charge.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE UNIVERSAL GENIUS.

It was a charming forenoon, and all the sylvan way smiled blandly on us as we passed. Following the stream, we had travelled slowly along for an hour or more, when our attention was attracted by a voice in the distance addressing some object with great emphasis and many inflections. In a few moments, the speaker appeared, standing upon a little cliff of rock which jutted over the creek, at a place where it broadened into a mimic bay; indenting the farther bank, and presenting a mirror-like surface, in which ever and anon he surveyed himself with much apparent complacency, as he proceeded with his harangue.

I looked to see a companion, but he was all alone; his declamation being intended for an imaginary House of Lords. Much amused, I stopped my little party behind the concealment afforded by a huge cypress tree, to observe the stranger more closely.

He was a man of twenty-eight years, or thereabouts, and clad in a natty drab velvet hunting frock and breeches. A rifle lay upon the rock, near by him. His hair was red, and as usual with persons of that

complexion, his skin was fair and rosy, and his manner impulsive and ardent.

When he had done addressing the "noble lords," he hemmed a little, blew his nose, brushed back his ear-locks, and striking an attitude with one leg thrown back, and arm outstretched, shouted, "May it please your Honor, and Gentlemen of the Jury!" Then followed an impassioned appeal in behalf of a supposititious prisoner at the imaginary bar: his powerful lungs making the woods echo again. When the ranter had come to a pause, quite spent of breath, and was wiping the perspiration from his forehead, I issued from my covert, and, after bidding him good morning, complimented him upon his elocution.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, after returning my salutation very cordially, "you overheard me, did you? Demosthenes used to practise in this way, you know, alone by himself, at the sea-shore. So, you see, I have a classic precedent for my nonsense. Besides I am to be admitted to the bar, and expect political promotion. Ned Morlis can't begin with me. Think of his becoming a great pleader before a jury, or an orator upon the stump! It aint in him."

"You know the Morlis family, then?" said I, the name reminding me of old times.

"Oh, yes," he replied, "I met them in Augusta, last winter, while I was lecturing there, upon Phrenology, Physiology, Craniology, and other ologies too numerous to mention; and lately I have passed a day or two at their plantation, which is not far from here. In fact I strayed out from that place, this morning, to get a shot at a deer."

"And you have had one?"

"Yes—no—that is to say," he stammered, coloring a little, "I saw a fine young buck at the drink, here, but I wasn't used to it, you see, and when I went to take aim, my heart bumped at my ribs as if it were a sin, and I was so obfuscated by surprise, or something, that I couldn't fire until the rascal was out of sight."

"It usually happens. so with new beginners," said I, laughing; "an instance of a man's shooting well the first time he aimed at a deer, was never known. At least, old hunters have told me so."

"Then, you think Morlis won't plague the life out of me, when he is told of it?" he asked.

"I doubt whether he could do any better himself," I replied. "I am going in this direction; good morning, sir."

"Hold on;" said he, picking up his gun, and taking the opposite side of me from Lu; "if agreeable, I will walk along with you, though afoot. I am a great pedestrian, you see. In fact, I have walked many a time, for a wager. Plenty of cold water, and exercise! that's what I go in for. By the by, that's a charming child you have there! Your own, I suppose? The mother, not fond of riding, like myself, prefers to walk. Shows her good sense. I should have known that by the conformation of her forehead, for I am a bit of a phrenologist, as well as a disciple of Lavater.—

In yonder countenance divine,
Where sense with beauty doth combine;
Our skilful science can descry,
A well of wisdom in the eye.

Don't put that in quotation marks, my friend! It's original and impromptu. I'm pretty good at such things. By Jove! if all the albums I've written as good things as that in, were piled together, it would make a right smart heap, as these hoosiers about here, say. I beg your pardon! I don't know but what you are a native?"

Relieving him upon that point, I asked him if he knew what plans of life the Morlis young men had before them.

"The mother, an ambitious woman, you see, would like to make one a great lawyer and the other (that's Robert) a preacher; but Bob swears he wont be a parson, and will be nothing but a planter, which is glory enough for one man. The fact is, there's a yellow girl on the plantation that he cottons to, and that's his anchor for the present. Ned is inclined to please his mother, and in order that he may be content to study in an Augusta law office, the family, (all but Bob,) pass most of the time at their residence near that city. But I'd like to see him plead a case against me. Before he knew it, I would talk the nose off his face. Yes, sir! as sure as my name is Jim Whytal."

"Whittle?" said I, "Whittle? where have I heard that name before?"

"Hang it, sir; not Whittle, but Whytal; W-h-y-t-a-l.

'Who steals my purse steals trash;
But he that filches my good name,
Robs me of that which naught enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed!'

That's Shakspeare abbreviated."

Is it instrumentation you want? I can play on the flute, the fiddle, the clarinet, the cornet-a-piston, the bass-horn, the drum, the fife and the jewsharp. Is it vocalization? I can sing you most anything, from an oratorio down to Jim Crow. Do you want tragedy? I can rant you Richard, or lisp you Romeo, to your heart's content. Is there a call for comedy? you never saw a better Dick Dashall or Captain Absolute. I can paint and draw, but the devil of it is my drafts are never honored. In short," he added, more soberly, "like most of those who have many strings to their bow, I have not a single gift, natural or acquired, that I can depend upon for vulgar bread and butter. If I had had only a taste for sawing wood, and made the most of it, I should be far better off now, than I am."

"You are right," said I, "one regular occupation, no matter, how humble, so it be honest, is better than a dozen.

"Ah!" he sighed, "I must get spliced to a fortune: marry a plantation, with lots of short-haired relations. The worst of it is, where there are such attractions, all the others—such as grace, intelligence, &c—are lacking. Miss Morlis will do, and there are some pretty heiresses in Augusta, but in intellect, freshness of countenance, sparkling vivacity, and pleasing conversation, how infinitely superior are our Yankee girls to these southern ladies!"

By this time, we had reached a fork in the road, which was the nearest course for the universal genius to take to reach the bridge which he must cross on his way to the Morlis plantation; and so we parted.

CHAPTER XXX.

OLD FRIENDS.

My little party had now only a short piece of hilly road to ascend, to come within sight of Major McClure's clearing. This was the track up which my horse had dashed on the night of the awful storm, so memorable in the history of Lu and Waifwood. It looked as familiar as if I had seen it yesterday, though several years had elapsed.

A few minutes sufficed to bring us within sight of the homely but hospitable cabin. There was the old man, just outside, shelling some corn, under the shade of a fig tree which had been grown since I was there, and the good dame, in her mob-cap, and with spectacles on nose, in her accustomed seat in the door-way, knitting a stocking for her old man, to whom she was just then saying that she had let a fork drop that morning, and it stuck up in the floor, which made her sartin sure they'd have company before night. My heart rejoiced at the sight of them, and I wondered to myself whether or not they would know me, as I had greatly altered since they saw me last.

No, it was evident they did not remember me. Lu, of course, they welcomed, and rising from their seats

with native courtesy, they saluted me, but there was no look of recognition.

"Ah!" I cried, "have you so soon forgotten me?" and, handing Waifwood into the arms of the grateful Lu, I dismounted and stood before the old couple, with a hand for each. "Don't you know me?"

"Sartin," said the Major, brushing his eyes as if to clear them, "I ought to know you, stranger, but for the life of me I—" and here he hesitated. The dame, meanwhile, had taken my hand, and was scanning me closely through her glasses. "Oh dear!" she exclaimed, completely at fault, "I'm gittin' so forgetful!"

"No wonder you don't know me," said I, to relieve their perplexity and chagrin: "this scar and my heavy beard were not here when you last saw me. I am Major —, who was with you the night—"

"That poor Lu was struck by lightning?" cried the overjoyed dame, interrupting me, "oh Major, Major! I'm so glad to see ye!" and throwing her arms wide open, she gave me a good hug, and a kiss on either cheek: a welcome which I as cordially returned, for I did love the good old soul, she so reminded me of my own dear mother. Nor was Major McClure less hearty in his welcome. He, too, gave me a regular bear's hug, and then with tears of joy in their eyes, they stood and gazed at me, recalling one by one my lineaments to their recollection.

"And this yere little darling, is your chile?" said the dame, kissing Waifwood and caressing her, in the arms of the imbecile. "Why Lu, dear! I haven't seen you looking so bright and happy for a long time!"

The poor creature's response was by kissing Waifwood and giving her the bottle of ore to play with. Then sitting upon the floor, they emptied the golden scales and pebbles and amused themselves with them like two children, until the little one's eyelids drooped, and, with her head in Lu's lap, she fell asleep.

"What on arth has that gal got in that bottle?" was the exclamation of the old lady, at the first sight of Lu's golden gleanings at the creek. "She has another bottle hid somewhar about the cabin, full of one thing or another that she's picked up, here and thar, and thinks 'em cur'ous I spose. She's a good deal like a chile."

"Has she never seemed to have, even for a few moments, any of her former intelligence?" I inquired.

McClure shook his head sadly, as he answered for his wife, "No, Major; Lu hasn't been herself at any time since she was struck."

"Yet," said I, "she has not been so foolishly employed as might have been: I have known wiser people to do worse than this." And taking up some of the ore, I put it into the old man's large, hard hand.

"For the lard-a-massy's sake!" exclaimed the dame, adjusting her specs closer to her eyes, and stooping over to scrutinize the precious stuff, "why I—I do declar'! it aint goold, is it?"

"It's monsus like some the Nor' Carlins chap showed us!" said McClure, examining it carefully.

"It is the pure ore," I rejoined: "there is no better in the mint. But excuse me now, while I put up my horse, and then I will tell you all about it—at least all that I know."

"And I'm cur'ous to know, too," said the old man, rising slowly, "how you and your darter, thar—"

"Do see how the sweet thing sleeps!" exclaimed the dame. "She's a darling!"

"And how she takes to our Lu!" said McClure, as he covered his head with an old palm-leaf hat, and took his staff. "Good gal, good gal!" he added, patting Lu encouragingly on the head, as, still seated upon the floor, she caressed very gently the soft, glossy ringlets of the beautiful child. "If my lame knee wasn't stiffer than usual, Major, I wouldn't trouble you to help me put up your animal, but—"

"Dear suz me!" cried the old lady, interrupting him eagerly; "do let me go: I used to harness our Billy. Ah, sir," (and here a shade of sadness passed over the countenances of the simple-hearted couple,) "you remember poor Billy! His grave's out yender, jist whar you helped put him. The good Mr. Perrin writ an epitaph for him, and you shall read it sometime; but now I'll go with you to the barn."

"No, dame," said her husband, brushing a tear from his eye, "I'll go. You git suthing for the Major and his darter to eat. Come, it's a'most dinner time. Let's have the pot a bilin' in less'n no time.

Jack had already found his way to the barn, and was waiting to be let in, when McClure and I got there.

After disposing the horse comfortably, we returned to the cabin. On our way, I informed my host where I found Lu, with her golden harvest, and advised him to purchase land in that locality. He would do so, he said, but was without the means. "But then," said I,

"as the guardian of Lu, you cannot put to a better use the gold ore which she has herself gleaned from the bed of her favorite creek. Keep the whole thing a secret until the purchase shall have been consummated; else you will meet with much competition and trouble. It is public land and will be sold by Government in the spring. From the roughness of the locality, it will not fetch a high price, unless its auriferous character is suspected. I will take Lu's findings to the mint, when my work in this quarter shall have been completed, and have them coined, and with the proceeds you can purchase the section I mean."

"Wall, you see, Major," rejoined the old man, with some hesitancy of manner, "I am no speckylator. I've got land enough to 'sport me and my old woman, and as for goold-huntin', dye see, my brother William (God bless him wharever he is!) has spent all his life at it on the coast of Africa, and now that he's an old man,—(if he's still livin') what matters ef so be he has got a pile of it—and maybe he has and maybe he hasn't—he can't be no happier than my good ole dame and I, who's got nothin'. Besides, I don't wan't to touch anything that aint mine; and that yere stuff that poor Lu's found, aint, you know."

"But you have a right to invest it for her," I rejoined, "and should she ever recover the normal healthy condition of her weakened brain, as she already has of her body, she will have something for herself and—" child, I was about to say, but checking myself in time, I added, "and not be entirely dependent upon the cold charity of a heartless world, when you are dead."

"You're right, Major;" said McClure. "You are right. I didn't think of that. But nen, ef she had anything, the Wrights would take it, as sure's you're born."

"Do they ever assert any claim to Lu?" I asked.

"No, they're too all-fired mean to do that as long as they think she aint worth anything, and wouldn't be worth her keeping," he replied, in an indignant tone. "But as long as I have a home and a mouthful to eat, poor Lu is welcome to it."

We had reached the cabin door, and I suffered the subject to drop for the present; resolving however, in my own mind, that I would do what I could to have Lu's treasure so invested that it should ultimately accrue to the advantage of her child.

"What has become of Cale Wright?" I inquired, upon taking the proffered seat.

"Oh, don't you think," exclaimed the good woman of the house, (who was now getting her table ready for dinner,) Cale went off about the time you was here, and hasn't been back since; and, they do say his parents haint heern a word from him.

"He was a drestle high sperited feller," said McClure, lighting his pipe, "and, like his mother, praps he's got an Injun temper, and won't forgive 'em. So you see with all their wealth, they aint no happier than other folks."

"I have always noticed," I remarked, "that those families which, to a casual observer, seem to have all the means of happiness, and to be the special favorites of fortune, have some interior trouble to poison their enjoyment."

"Happy is nothin'," exclaimed the old lady. "But, now, do tell us what you have been doing all this time. I declar, I'm so glad to see ye, I could cry. Come tell us what you promised. We long to hear it all."

"What would you say," I replied, "if I should tell you that you have seen that little beauty, there, before to-day?"

The worthy people opened their eyes, and looked first at Waifwood, then at me; evidently puzzled. After keeping them in this state of mind for a few moments, I informed them that the child which they saw was no other than the infant which I had brought to the cabin on the night of the storm.

Their surprise and joy, at this, may be imagined. Then, of course I had to tell the whole story from beginning to end. With her hands covered with flour and dough, the old lady stopped in the work of mixing a short-cake, and listened, open-mouthed, to my narration. Nor was her old man less interested. Putting his pipe on the floor at his feet, he fixed his hands upon his knees, and leaned over to listen. I relieved their curiosity with more brevity than I have done yours, gentle reader, not only as a charity to them, but to enable the good woman to resume the interrupted task of making the aforesaid cake.

How they received my narrative I will not now describe: suffice it to say, that I did not reveal that Waifwood was the offspring of poor Lu, or that young Wright had any interest in her.

It was arranged, that for the present (perhaps for a year or two,) the child should remain with the old folks. Indeed, they offered to adopt her as their

daughter, and henceforth to regard her as Waifwood McClure. It was a good name, I rejoined, and she might take it, but I was not prepared to give her up entirely, and forever, to any one; no, not even to them in whose kindness I had such implicit confidence.

But the little one must be provided with clothing, and there was no one at hand to make it up for her. Of course, no assistance was to be expected from Lu, and though the old lady was the artisan of her own simple attire, she confessed that she should be but an awkward hand at cutting and fitting for Waifwood.

While Mrs. McClure and I were talking upon this subject, her husband was amusing "the children" (as he called them,) at the door of the cabin with his pipe and a bowl of soap-suds, from which he was blowing some magnificent bubbles. Their play was abruptly terminated by an arrival, and, rising quickly, Lu took her little mate by the hand, and ran with her into the inner room.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE MORLIS FAMILY.

THE new-comers were Mrs. Morlis and her daughters. They had done me the honor to call in person, to welcome my return to their neighborhood and insist upon my making their house my home as long as I remained.. They all appeared very glad to see me, and, without leaving their seats in the carriage (which was driven by the smiling Peter,) asked me enough questions to establish the Georgian claim to a large share of what is usually called, "Yankee curiosity." However, there was no harm done, and I answered their inquiries with almost as much vivacity as they put them, until they began to ask about the woman and child who had come with me to Major McClure's.

"Mr. Why-tal," said Mrs. Morlis, "told us it was your wife and child, but from his description of them I thought there must be some mistake. Do tell us, if you are married, sir?"

I was a little annoyed, and shaking my head, would have turned the conversation, but Sophy was too quick for me.

"Our guest is such a rattle-brained fellow!" she exclaimed. "I thought that very likely you had been

smoking him for his inquisitiveness. These Yankees are so pointed in their questions!"

"Take care!" I replied, with a smile, "I am a Yankee, myself."

"But so much like a Southerner!" said the widow, regarding me almost affectionately.

"Tell me," exclaimed Sophy; "wasn't it that crazy girl, Lu, whom the simple Mr. Why-tal took to be your wife?"

I assented with a nod, and Sophy, laughed heartily, exclaimed to Charlotte, "I told you so, but you would have it that I was wrong!"

"And who was the child, Major?" cried Mrs. Morlis. "The one I presume who ran into the cabin with Lu as we drove up."

"Do let us see her!" said Charlotte: "Mr. Why-tal described her as a little angel."

"Excuse me," I replied, "she is unused to strangers, and very shy."

I was not at all disposed to be communicative in respect to Waifwood, but a moment's reflection satisfied me, that to balk the curiosity of the visitors would only increase it, and as, from their neighborhood, they would be in the way to see the child almost daily, it would be unwise to attempt to keep them entirely in the dark in regard to the nature of my own relations to the foundling. For that reason, I spoke of her as a poor orphan whom I had adopted, and now put with McClures to board. I was a little angered inwardly, at noticing a sinister look of intelligence exchanged by the two sisters, but this was extinguished in a moment by the kind manner in which their mother

expressed herself desirous of being of service to my protegee. They all wished to see the child, but seeing the reluctance of Lu, I told them they must excuse Waifwood from presenting herself, as she was not suitably dressed.

"Oh, what nonsense!" exclaimed Mrs. Morlis; "and yet I like to see children a little careful about appearances. Now I think of it, I have got some frocks that Sophy and Charlotte wore, scarcely enough to soil them, when they were young."

"When we were young, indeed!" cried Sophy, with a forced giggle. "One would think that we were old, Lotty!"

"Old enough to be married," retorted her mother. "But take care and don't set your cap for that queer stranger, Sophy!"

"Mr. Why-tal? Ha! ha! ha! I think I see myself!" rejoined her daughter, laughing and turning red. "He is going to-morrow, and I'm sure I'm glad of it."

"You like him, Sophy; you know you do!" said Charlotte, spitefully.

"Pshaw!" exclaimed her sister, "I haven't exchanged a dozen words with him since he has been with us. But for his being brother's friend, I shouldn't treat him half decent."

"Edward thinks a heap of him," said Mrs. Morlis, "upon very slight acquaintance. But, Major, come to the house before he goes away. We will get up some little amusement. Besides, I want to talk to you upon a matter very near my heart."

"Oh, mamma!" cried Sophy, archly: "you are not going to make love to the Major?"

"I think that would be very easy," replied the widow, coloring and laughing; "but don't be alarmed, Major, I beg, by Soph's smart speech. She will be more careful when she is married. I only want to consult you a little in respect to a plan I have for Mr. Edward Morlis, my eldest son, who is about to be admitted to the bar, of which I think I have a right to believe he will become an ornament."

After a little further remark upon the brilliant parts and prospects of her favorite, she insisted that I should visit them as soon as I had rested sufficiently. To which I replied, that my business would call me away on the morrow, but I would pass the night with them if agreeable.

Mother and daughters, all looked disappointed at the intelligence that I was to leave so soon, and protested against it with much vehemence. The fact is, the Southern people crave company, for the sake of the entertainment which is incidental to it. Living, as most of the planters' families do, in the midst of a slave population, they have very limited association with their own equals; for the poorer class of white folks they regard as mere trash, and they are less talkative with them than with the negroes. Hence, the plantation life of the owners is very dull, and they look upon a visit from a well-bred stranger, or an old acquaintance, as a perfect godsend, to break the monotony of their existence. Corn and swine—the two grand materials of plantation food, for both master and slave—being raised in superabundance, the expense of feeding their guests is inconsiderable, and really of no account in comparison with the informa-

tion and amusement afforded them by their visitors. For these reasons, I have never placed that high estimate upon southern hospitality which most northern people do, and though Mrs. Morlis' family was far more refined than any I knew in that region of country, and kept a well provided table, (at least when company was present,) I was not much "set up," as the Yankees say, by their urgent invitation and proffers of attention. Indeed, I was a little skeptical as to the sincerity of their friendship, which I regarded as only skin-deep. The excessively cordial manner of the southern people generally, without being hypocritical, is very superficial and deceptive. One, little versed in their peculiarities, is apt to be taken with this kind of address, and to contrast it with the more reserved manners of the northern people, greatly to the disparagement of the latter; but let him put their professions of friendship to the test and he will find them very unsubstantial. The result of my experience has been, that the friendship of "cold northerners" is more enduring and reliable.

The little time, I had to spare, I could pass far more pleasantly with my humble friends in the homely cabin, and it was only because of the insufficient conveniences for lodging that I consented to pass the night at Mrs. Morlis's.

With a few parting words, the callers then rode away, evidently piqued at my preference of McClure's as a place of sojourn.

After partaking of the repast which the dame had provided for us, we visited the grave of Billy, and other objects of interest; and while thus occupied

were saluted by Mrs. Wright, who protested, that, hearing of my arrival, she had come over on purpose to see me. "Had I seen her son, since I left there? could I give her any information of his whereabouts?" These were the first inquiries. My reply in the negative seemed to disappoint her a little, and she referred so bitterly to Cale's absence, that I could not resist the impulse to defend him with some warmth; ascribing the whole blame to herself and husband. She retorted, with the insinuation that Cale had preferred new friends to old ones, and had been led into an unfilial and rebellious course by bad counsel. Then turning her attention abruptly to Lu, who was picking some wild flowers and presenting them to Waifwood, she exclaimed that it was about time she made herself useful. She had no idea of her wasting any more time in idleness at the McClure's; strolling about hither and thither, nobody knew where. "You Lu," she added, "do you understand that?"

The girl, who had evidently been aware that she was the subject of the strong-minded woman's remarks, made no response, but with a look of fear took the child's hand and began to shy off with her.

"You Lu!" shouted Mrs. Wright, sternly, "come here. I am your mistress: I'll let you know that."

The imbecile took the child in her arms, and stood cowering and trembling like a guilty thing, without obeying the command.

"Whose young one is that ere?" cried Mrs. Wright, approaching her with a menacing gesture. "Put it down and come with me. It is high time that you was to work again." As she said this, she

made an attempt to take Waifwood from her. There was a brief struggle on both sides, during which Lu, recovering in the shock her long lost power to speak, astonishing us by shrieking out vehemently, "No! no! no!" in the most imploring accent.

McClure and I both interposed indignantly, and the old man, taking his imperious neighbor very unceremoniously by the shoulders, pushed her away; asking her angrily as he did so, "Ef she knowed what she was doin' on?"

"I'll make you pay for this; you see if I don't!" she exclaimed, in a voice choked with rage. Then seeing me soothing the terrified Waifwood, she exclaimed, "If you think, Major, that that slave o' mine is going to wait on any misbegotten brat of yourn, you're greatly mistaken."

"Lu aint no slave o' yourn, nor o' nobody else," said McClure. "She was free, years ago: leastways, I heerd so, and I reckon you'd own up, ef you'd tell the truth. And here you've been and left her on my hands for near about five years, cause she warnt no manner o' use to you nor anybody else—"

He was interrupted by a denial that the girl had ever been set free.

"She played the dumb fool, and cheated us into letting her go where she would," exclaimed Mrs. Wright, sneeringly, "but now I know it was a contrived plan between you all; for she can talk as well as anybody, and I dare say you find she makes a good nurse for that 'ere little come-by-chance of the Major's."

"Don't you think, neighbor, you had better keep

pretty whisht about come-by-chances?" said McClure. "I have heern that you had something to do in that line yourself 'fore you came from old Kaintuck."

Mrs. Wright turned redder than a peony and her eyes glowed through her green spectacles like a cat's in the dark.

"Insulting ruffian," she exclaimed, "I wont stay here to be so put upon. My husband shall take this in hand. You are brave men, to attack a lone woman!"

With this cutting remark, she went on her way.

"You see, Major," said the old man to me, "I was right. They want to git the gal agin, the moment they hear she's a little brighter! But Lu, you dear soul, you made me a'most doubt my own ears, when you spoke jist now! Speak again."

"No, no," she responded, and shook her head mournfully; then, putting down Waifwood, took the child by the hand, and retraced her steps to the cabin.

McClure and I followed; conversing, as we went, upon the incidents of the afternoon.

CHAPTER XXXII.

WHAT SHALL HE BE?

ABOUT sundown, Peter came with the carriage, and still handsome pair of mules to convey me to Mrs. Morlis's in time for tea. Upon our arrival at the cedars, I was cordially greeted by the widow and her daughters, who, (leaving Messrs Robert and Whytal smoking their cigars upon the piazza,) had come down to the gate, to welcome me.

It will be remembered, that I have said of this family that they were of Virginia origin and northern culture, and, hence, far more refined than most families even in the more populous portions of Georgia. Of course, there was a vast difference in the mode of their living, which had a degree of luxury and style entirely exceptional in the wild region of country in which they were located. They were proud of this, and in their entertainment of me, it was obvious that they meant to impress me with a sense of this superiority. In the ladies, this was not very offensive, for I can tolerate and even be amused by vanity in women; but the haughty yet unpolished manner of Mr. Robert Morlis was disagreeable. Disgraced at Cambridge,

where his licentious habits and unpliant brains had defied the combined efforts of the Faculty and professors to render him fit to graduate, he had returned to the plantation nearly as unpolished as he had left it, and with a hearty dislike for educated society. Still the fellow had a manner, which coarse as it was, passed for that of a gentleman. Certainly it was not at all after the model of Gov. Hayne and John C. Calhoun, whose good breeding would have entitled them to respect in the most polished court of Europe, but I have met with many wealthy men of the Robert Morlis pattern, not only in Georgia and Alabama, but in South Carolina; bluff and lavish, it may be, but ignorant, narrow-minded, vain and arrogant. Gross profanity, so common with men of his stamp, was among the least of his faults some would say, but I confess that his careless and frequent use of the name of the Creator, in defiance of the commandment, shocked and disgusted me. I know it is unhappily too common, in all sections of the country, for persons, regarding themselves as gentlemen, to bandy the holy names of God, and Jesus Christ, as freely and grossly as if they were mere by-words, but it is no less a crime because of its frequency; and I confess I have never become so accustomed to it, as to be able to repress a thrill of pain whenever it is done in my hearing. This feeling of revulsion did not appear to be shared by the ladies of the Morlis family, for though his mother occasionally chid her son when profane in her presence, it was rather in a jesting manner, eliciting a smile from her daughters, (I noticed, at the tea-table,) and making no more impression upon Robert than the fly th-

upon the short, thick nose which embellished his dark, sallow countenance.

He liked Whytal pretty well because the universal genius had many laughable anecdotes to relate and was, besides, a capital mimic; but northern men, generally, he did not scruple to say, during the evening, were his abomination. They were all he said (in much coarser terms than I will soil these pages with,) a pack of villanous pedlers and abolitionists, who ought to be driven into the Atlantic Ocean, as they would be, finally, into Pandemonium. As for John Quincy Adams, instead of being in the United States Senate, presenting those cursed petitions for the abolition of slavery in the District, he ought to be in the bottomless pit, &c., &c.

With this kind of talk, which appeared altogether too agreeable to the ladies, he regaled us freely at the tea-table, and my vindication of the people of my section only led him to greater abuse. Nor could Whytal's good-natured efforts to divert him with witticisms, and turn the conversation into more genial channels, lead the ill-mannered planter to change the subject. My profession alone saved me from offensive personal allusions, for he did not hesitate to tell Whytal that it was no use for him to poke his fun: if he was an abolitionist he ought to be strung up.

"I like harmony," rejoined the punster, with a laugh, "but I don't want to chord in that way. Besides, I never like to be held in suspense."

Sophy thought this a capital retort, and joined Whytal in his cachination, as did her mother, also.

During the evening, we were repeatedly invited to

drink, by the young planter, but in a tone almost as offensive as his strictures, for it was both patronizing and arrogant. I declined to join him in his libations, but the easy nature of Whytal could not withstand the domineering urgency of his entertainer, and he drank whiskey with him a number of times, (though lightly,) from sheer dislike of incurring his displeasure. I have seen a great deal of this kind of impressment in the South, but never could discover any real hospitality in it. One sturdy northerner, that I knew, lost his life by it. He was reading a newspaper in a hotel saloon in Georgia, when a planter, of the Morlis pattern, somewhat excited by liquor, swore jocosely that every man in the room should drink with him. All except the stranger readily complied. His respectful refusal excited the ire of the lawless bully, and, drawing a knife, he stabbed him to the heart. Subsequently the murderer underwent a mock trial, and was acquitted of course.

The reader will readily conceive, that I felt no regret when, without deigning to offer any excuse for his absence, Mr. Robert left the room.

"Now," said Mrs. Morlis, evidently experiencing a sense of relief, "let us talk a little about Mr. Edward. His brother, Mr. Robert, does not agree with me in regard to the prospects of my first-born. Mr. Robert Morlis has a muscular mind, a strong arm and an open, generous nature, reminding one of Richard Cœur de Lion; but he has an undue contempt for great legal attainments and the triumphs of statesmanship, for which Mr. Edward Morlis is, we all think, well-adapted. For my own part, I admit that

the life of a planter, with his immense fields and herds and hundreds of slaves, has all the grandeur of the barons in the feudal age, but is it not a great thing to rule the destinies of a nation, as our statesmen do? to carve out new empires from our territories, to overcome and manage the brute masses by sheer intellectual superiority, and to establish a political oligarchy, wanting only the titles to render it as splendid as the nobility of Europe?"

"You are eloquent upon this theme, Mrs. Morlis!" I responded, with a smile.

"I should not be a Southern lady, and a Virginian, if I were not," she rejoined. "My native State, you know, has been called the mother of presidents. But my late husband used to say, before making presidents we must first make statesmen, and to make them we must first make lawyers."

"Or ministers," said I, smiling. "In Georgia, the pulpit paves the way to political position."

("Apt alliteration's artful aid," remarked Whytal, aside to Sophy.)

"It is upon that very point I wish to speak to you, my dear Major; and then I shall have a favor to ask." said the widow.

I bowed slightly, and she proceeded.

"Perhaps I have erred in wishing my son to aim for a glorious legal career. If he were in Virginia or the North, that certainly should be his course, but everything is so uncivilized down here in Georgia! The courts are held in no respect, and as great crimes are seldom brought before a jury, there's no chance for a powerful pleader."

"There are civil suits enough," I rejoined. "Here, for a proof, is a Milledgeville newspaper with no less than five columns full of sheriff's sales under execution."

"The collection of debts for northern creditors is a very low, pettifogging business: I hope brother Edward wont dirty his hands with any of that!" exclaimed Charlotte, with a disdainful toss of the head.

"My dear child," rejoined her mother, haughtily, "don't imagine I could entertain any such idea for a moment. But as I was saying, Major; perhaps Mr. Edward would do better to obtain the requisite popularity by turning preacher. Until settled somewhere, it would enable him to address numerous congregations, besides the Baptists associations or Methodist Episcopal camp meetings, and make a host of friends who will give him their votes when he shall have become a candidate for the Legislature. Don't you think so, yourself, Major?"

"Why, mother," exclaimed Sophy, "what can the Major know about such things? I'll bet my life, I know a heap more about political management than he does. We make politics a science, down South; but your Yankee, what cares he how the game goes, so that his cotton mills are kept spinning and his wooden clocks and nutmegs are ground out fast enough, and sell well at good prices?"

"Ha! ha! ha!" shouted Whytal.

"I'm sure," said Mrs. Morlis, "the Major is around the country a great deal, and is the better observer, perhaps, from not being a politician himself. If my

son should think well of it, Major, which had he better join, the Baptists or the Methodists?"

"That should be decided according to his own private religious convictions," I replied.

"Oh, you don't exactly understand me," said the lady: "it was not of his personal convictions that I was thinking, but what profession he should assume, to obtain the widest influence.

I presume I looked a little blank at this, for Sophy pointed at my face, and laughed ready to kill herself. "Look at him!" she cried, when she had recovered her command over her risibles: "Here's a sage observer of politics for you! expecting a politician in the pulpit to care what his creed is, so that it suits the majority of vulgar voters! This is too rich!" and she laughed again.

"It was not that I expected either sincerity or consistency in a politician, but that your mother should look for such ductility in her son," I retorted.

"Ah, Major, you have not lived long enough in the South to be entirely free from the rigid notions of the Puritans, I see!" said Mrs. Morlis. "We of Virginia, you know, are descended from the cavaliers, and have freer souls. Your New England christians square their conduct exactly by old sectarian rules, as the round-heads did the cut of their hair and beard, but the pulpit folk in this region make their religion conform somewhat to convenience and expediency; and to be honest with you, I think it the most sensible view to take of the matter."

"Then," said I, "you would make religion a plastic

thing, to be moulded like wax into any form at pleasure, according as caprice, or local prejudices, or the financial expediency of the time, may dictate?"

"Mother don't mean that!" said Charlotte, with some asperity. "Our religion is just as consistent as yours."

"But it can't be denied," said Sophy, "that religion, everywhere, is more or less warped by the political or pecuniary interests of its professors. There for example, is that preacher, Davis, if he wanted an excuse for stealing a sheep, I believe he would quote scripture authority for doing it."

Whytal "owed her one," and laughed very heartily.

The conversation, which had become distasteful to me, was now interrupted by the entrance of a yellow girl bearing a salver of persimmons, with the compliments of "Massa Robert" for Mr. Whytal. It was a stale trick often practised upon strangers, and the intended victim was familiar with it, but, pretending entire innocence, he put one of the puckery plumbs to his lips and immediately uttered a prolonged whistle, where upon the young planter came from behind the parlor door, laughing boisterously and pointing at the shocking bad face which the genius put on to please him. The mirth was general, and even the slave girl smiled, though I learnt subsequently that she was sick at heart.

Mr. Robert was now in a rollicking humor, being a little "set-up" with whiskey, and to make some amends for his joke upon Whytal, he told him that Juno should treat him to a dance. The girl gave her

master a deprecating look, and hung her head, evidently abashed at the idea of making herself so conspicuous before company. Her modesty and pleasant though dejected expression, interested me, and I could willingly have excused her, but Mrs. Morlis seconded her son's command, and Juno complied. The music to which she danced was a plantation air, drummed by her upon the salver, which (served as a tambourine,) and accompanied by her voice. It reminded me of the fandango which I had often seen in South America. At its conclusion, Whytal applauded and told her good-naturedly that he would repay her by a song of his own.

The ladies exchanged a half-disdainful smile at his condescension, but liked his music too well to offer any remark calculated to discourage him. Taking a seat at the piano, the panting Juno upon a cushion at his feet, with her eyes fixed gratefully upon him, our good fellow then sang a composition, melodious and tender as any of the Spanish love songs. Before it was over, I saw a big tear or two roll down the olive cheek of the slave, and thought to myself "there is some secret grief in thy heart my poor girl, or I am no judge of human nature!" But the impression made by the singer was not confined to her. We were all delighted; all but Robert Morlis. To his gross nature, the song was puerile and effeminate, and he called upon Whytal to give him a good rousing song of the sea, or an air to fill flagons by, and to quaff them, too. The accommodating fellow complied, accompanying himself with most enthusiastic force on the piano. "Beethoven's Dream" followed, and a plaintive little

air which he began without an accompaniment, though he had one, before it was ended, by Juno, who, sitting upon the cushion, with her chin scarcely higher than the keys, with which she played, picked out the tune intuitively. She had a natural taste for music, and I believe she could have been made an excellent pianist. The men of our party praised her highly, but the ladies were silent.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

JUNO.

WHILE Morlis was ordering refreshments Whytal said aside to me, that Juno was the slave whom "Bob" (as he called him,) liked so well, but unfortunately she had a lover of her own color whom she liked better.

Brandy and wine, and late ripe Cherokee figs, peaches, and grapes, were brought in by uncle Pete and a black girl, and carried around to the company. After we had partaken, Morlis winked at Whytal and filling a wine glass with brandy, which the rest of us thought was wine, handed it, with an air of bluff kindness, to Juno and bade her drink it. I noticed the little gray-haired old badger, Peter, grimacing at her and shaking his head behind his master's shoulder, as if to warn her. She did not appear to notice him, but declined the proffered glass."

"Drink it, you fool!" said Morlis, peremptorily.

"Thankee, massa Robert," she rejoined with a timid, deprecating look, "I never drink wine."

"Down with it!" he exclaimed, in a tone and manner admitting of no farther parley.

Juno swallowed the contents of the glass hur-

riedly, and then gasped for breath, while her master with some difficulty restrained his laughter.

"Oh dear!" cried the victim of his joke, at length, "it was brandy!" and she began to cough. Morlis seemed to regard it as an excellent joke, though purely accidental. The ladies laughed, and advised her to get to bed while she had the power. With a reproachful look at her inebriate master and a curtsy to the rest of the party, poor Juno retired.

"Golly, massa Bob!" exclaimed Peter, who, (from having trotted the brute on his knee when a baby, and waited upon him ever since, was allowed more familiarity with him than the other slaves,) "what's one man's meat, as my old woman used to say, 'is another gal's pizen.' Dat ar brandy like to choke foolish June, but I jis like to see um try to choke old uncle Pete!"

"Well, here; we'll see!" rejoined his young master, filling a glass. With a chuckle, and a smile irradiating his bronzed features, the old negro wished everybody present a long life, and drank to the health of the absent "massa Ned."

"I'ee no chickun; he-yah!" said he, turning the emptied glass upside down, and patting his breast; "but dar's no mistake about it, dat ar little brandy was as strong as big Goliah! he-yah," and he withdrew with the salver and things, chuckling as he went, "I guss it make June drunk as a tyke!"

"What made you give that to her?" exclaimed Mrs. Morlis to her son, in a tone of deprecation, yet with a smile lurking in the corners of her mouth; and without waiting for his reply, she turned to me and

remarked, that Mr. Robert was very kind, and at times very playful with the servants: too much so, indeed. "He thought the world of Juno, for she was a very clean, tidy girl, and had been well raised. Her father was an exhorter, and she a member of his church."

"And he can preach real well, too," said Sophy, "if he is only a mulatto."

"Why, sister, how can you say so?" exclaimed Charlotte, disdainfully. "I am sure, the fellow's remarks are sometimes very insulting to the owners."

"He censures what he regards as our faults," retorted Sophy, "but—"

"What he regards!" exclaimed Charlotte, interrupting her sister, in a tone of ineffable disgust. "I don't see why Mr. Evans lets him go on so!"

"You see we slaveholders allow our servants greater freedoms, in some respects, than would be tolerated in the same class at the North," said Mrs. Morlis, aside to me.

"If he was my nigger I'd shut him up; but old Evans seems to be proud of him," said Mr. Robert, with a hiccup. "Says he's the best hand on his plantation. (hiccup.) When I bought the girl you saw here, (hiccup,) for eight hundred dollars, this yellow minister—"

"On working days he is a carpenter, and a right good one, too," parenthesized Mrs. Morlis.

"Her father," continued Mr. Robert, "objected, and it riled me so condemnably, that (hiccup,) I wanted to buy him, too, if it was for nothing more than to tie him up and teach him better manners,

(hiccup,) but old Evans had the face to ask twenty two hundred dollars for him! As much as I'd have to pay for a racer, sired by Eclipse himself. So (hiccup) I bought the horse and let the nigger alone. Ah, you ought to see that animal!"

"Which?" I asked.

"My nag, Yorick," he replied. "He was groomed in New Orleans all winter, and last spring (hiccup) came near taking a purse. 'The Spirit of the Times' gave a rousing account of it! You shall read it. I know Porter. I've cracked more than one bottle of champagne with him, and after the compliment (hiccup) which he paid Yorick, I ordered my factor at Charleston to send him a basket of the best (hiccup) brand. 'The Tall Son of York,' ha! ha! ha! he is the only man at the North with a soul bigger than a persimmon. Come mother, let's have a dance!"

"He is so jolly!" said Mrs. Morlis aside to me. "my son, we have not enough here for a cotillion, and unless you dance a four-handed reel—"

"Or a Virginny break-down," he suggested, interrupting her.

"Don't be so rude, Robert!" said Sophy, admonishingly.

"Such dances are so low-bred!" added Charlotte, wearily, "I don't know what the Major will think of us!"

"The Major be blest!" exclaimed Mr. Robert, laughingly. "Here Whytal you dance with Soph, and I'll take Lotte. Mother you (hiccup) and the Major lead off!"

But Mrs. Morlis was required at the piano, and I

was happy to be only a looker-on. The widow played for them a lively reel, and all began with considerable spirit, especially Mr. Robert; to the great delight of two or three blacks who came to the door, where they were joined by others, one after another, until I think I counted a dozen faces, gazing in, and grinning from ear to ear. The dance over, Morlis scattered the sable crew by a shout; then withdrew himself, beckoning to Whytal to follow, which he did after a laughing apology to the ladies.

It was now late, and pleading fatigue, I obtained an excuse also, and was shown to the comfortable room in which I was to lodge. An hour elapsed before I turned in, for, whenever it is convenient, I read a little before retiring. I had been in bed a few minutes when there was a knock at my door, and, in response to my call to "come in," Whytal entered.

"Really, Major," he began, "I beg your pardon for intruding, but the fact is I wanted to say to some one before I went to sleep, that Bob Morlis is a brute! Yes, sir, a brute! and I don't care who hears me say so. He is a burning shame to our species, sir!"

"Have you had any new evidence of that fact?" I inquired.

"You shall hear, sir; you shall hear!" replied our musical friend.

"Sit down and make yourself at home," said I pointing to a chair.

"Thankee," said he, seating himself and producing a cigar case; "have you any objection to my firing up?" "No," said I; and he continued,—“When I

went out with Bob Morlis to-night, he took me to one of his negro cabins.

"This is Juno's hut," he said, in a low tone, as we stood at the entrance. "I bought her for what little beauty the wench has, and placed her here for my better convenience. But, blast her, she has had the temerity to repel my purpose, and I have been fool enough to humor her prayers and tears until to-night. Now, I am not going to stand any more of her nonsense. Virtue is all well enough, but it can't fence a girl from the arms of her owner. Her high-horse notions about religion and chastity are not in keeping with her condition."

"I was disgusted at this shameless disclosure," Whytal remarked, "but such things are natural, you know, to the peculiar institution, and, making some allowance for Bob's intoxication, I endeavored to excite a better sentiment in his breast, by quoting to him the beautiful appeal of Portia to the hard-hearted Shylock:—

'The quality of mercy is not strained :
It droppeth as the gentle dew of heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is thrice blessed, &c.'

But though, we stood in the moonlight, and both scene and subject conjoined to give the passage a fine effect, it made no impression upon the planter."

"Condemn it!" said he, with a hiccup, "do you take me for a Jew? I want to befriend her. She shall be my dearest duck! my turtle dove. Is there any flavor of Shylock in that; hey?"

"I told him," said Whytal, "that perhaps she

already had a lover of her own rank, (I knew she had,) to whom she was devotedly attached. To which he replied, that she had had the temerity to say so, herself; but that was nothing; the sentiment of consecration to the object of one's affection, being a matter of education merely, and entertained only by white folks. A slave's affections belong to the master, though they were a treacherous set, and their laziness and deceit called for the constant use of the whip. June (so he called her,) pretended to the most entire fidelity to her nigger lover, but that was all bosh, and I'll prove it by yourself, says he."

"How, by me?" says L. "You shall go in, and possess her, my boy," says he, very affectionately. "You are a good fellow, Whytal," says he: "you can sing a good song; a capital song! June loves music; she will love you. Love me, love my dog, you know! She can't possibly resist you. Besides, you know, I have primed her with that glass of brandy. She's gone to roost. Now, my boy, sing her a ditty at the door before you go in. It's not locked. We don't have to fasten our doors on the plantations. We are all honest folks here, ha! ha! ha!"

"Thank'ee!" I replied, "you have woke up the wrong passenger." I felt like pitching into the brute, (for though I'm no Joseph, I am not quite a sensualist;) but repressing a blast of indignation that rushed like a simoom from my heart to my mouth, I took his arm and sought to guide his unsteady steps away from the cabin, under some pretence or other, to which he listened for a few moments, then stopped abruptly, cast off my arm from his, and swore that I should not

divert him from his purpose : he would go back and wake up Juno."

"Then I coaxed and besought the beast to resist the devil that possessed him. Finally he sank upon a stump, and I sat down by his side. I fairly talked him to sleep : (I believe it was with a long quotation from Childe Harold,) and there I have just left him, entirely overcome by the effect of his potations and snoring like a walrus."

Whytal's account filled me with painful interest, and I could not refrain from some severe comments upon that feature of slavery which was so strongly illustrated in the case of Juno. Here she was, an intelligent, virtuous girl, desirous of living uprightly, and devotedly in love with a youth of her own color and condition, who had declared his desire to marry her, yet she was entirely at the mercy of a brute, who owned that he had bought her merely for the gratification of his lust. Hers was not a rare case : I have known of many like it, and as long as slavery lasts, it is likely to be of common occurrence.

After Whytal had retired to his room, I lay awake a long while, thinking of these things. It was childish, but oh ! how often I said to myself, "If I were only rich !" Not for Juno's good alone, nor merely to secure poor Lu's liberty and happiness, but to relieve all such unfortunate cases as came under my observation to excite my sympathy and aggravate the pain by the humiliating consciousness that I was powerless to help them. Of that kind of misery, I have experienced as much perhaps, as any other man.

At length, tired nature succumbed and I fell asleep.

I cannot say how long I had slumbered, when I was awakened from a dream of shipwreck, (in which Lu and Waifwood were conspicuous,) by a loud shriek which was repeated, again and again. Hastily donning a portion of my clothing, I descended the stairs by the light of the full moon, and emerged into the open air, to aid the person who had uttered it. As I did so, I saw a woman in her night-dress come out of a cabin, at a little distance, struggling in the clutches of a ruffian, who was trying to get her back into the hut again. Unfortunately, I had no weapon, but without giving a thought to that, I rushed forward, and with one blow of my fist felled the rascal to the earth which he had polluted by his tread.

The girl fled, but I was right in my supposition; it was the slave, Juno. The man had drawn a bowie knife when he fell, but I wrested it from him and hurled it to a distance. As he rose, I recognized Robert Morlis, and calling him by name, desired a parley. Replying only with an oath, he aimed at my face a blow which I parried and returned to him with interest. He was a short, thick-set, muscular fellow, and having practised a great deal with Ottignon and Sheridan, the pugilists, while at Harvard College, was an expert boxer. In my youth, I had had a passion for the gloves, myself, though thoroughly detesting a match without them. In weight we were about equal, but I had the advantage of being quite cool and watchful to ward every blow, which it was less difficult to do, for the reason that, in his blind, rage my antagonist did not hit with much precision. He struck out finely, however, and the fight was a hard

one for some minutes; the blows falling thick and heavy, and occasionally making me see stars. I punished him severely before I had done with him—or rather before he had done with me, for he persisted in fighting as long as he could stand, and even then, came to the close hug and wrestled to carry me down with him as he fell.

Leaving Morlis panting upon the earth, too weak to rise, I repaired to my room and washing my face with the contents of my bottle, went to bed again, and slept comfortably until the sunlight streaming through the lattice, admonished me that it was time to dress for breakfast.

The reader will imagine that, under the circumstances, I would have been glad to pack up and leave, without waiting for that interesting meal; but in addition to my firm belief that ante-breakfast rides in the South were not conducive to good health, another objection was that—I did not like the looks of the thing. There was no danger of my meeting Mr. Robert at the table, for he now rejoiced in a countenance that would not be fit to present to polite society for a week at least, and I doubted whether the gentleman would deem it expedient to disclose the fact of our nocturnal rencontre to any one, much less to his mother and sisters.

But what had become of Juno? I was impatient to set Whytal on the track to obtain some information of her, and accordingly went to his room before going down stairs. He was as much astonished at my narration as I had been by his, and promised to bring to me, at McClure's, during the day, some tidings.

We descended together and breakfasted with the ladies, without making or hearing any allusion to Robert; and soon after, I took my departure. I had declined the proffered carriage, on the plea that as I was in good trim, and the morning was delightful, the walk would do me good: so started off afoot.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

LU IN DANGER.

ON my way home, I could not divert my reflections from the hardship of Juno's lot. And then, her parents and brothers and sisters—what solicitude and unhappiness it must give them! Mrs. Morlis, herself, had told me that these poor people were Christians. Doubtless, the poor man and his wife had an anxious interest in the moral welfare of their children, and their grief at having their daughter in the power of a debauchee, and her affection for her proper lover over-ridden and outraged by the lawless passion of a master whose will was not only supreme over her earthly destiny, but might influence, also, her eternal weal, must fill them with anguish. And the young man, of whom, though a slave, report spoke so well—would his grief and indignation be any the less because his skin was a shade darker than the sallow complexion of his sweetheart's owner? "Oh," (some cool apologist of the institution will say,) "the slaves have no strong, sensitive affections like our own, and are well accustomed to these things." But I will not admit there is any truth in that assertion, in the case of well-trained, intelligent negroes. The mass of the slaves, I know,

are stupid and devoid of that fine sense of honor which is the southern gentleman's boast, but I have no idea, that, even with them, the natural affections are so dormant that the black lover could see, without a bitter sense of wrong, his bride taken to the arms of her master.

Pursuing these reflections and my way, together, I came presently to the creek, and crossing the bridge, was soon in sight of the good folks' cabin. An unusual scene presented itself. Between me and the house, was a little party composed of Squire Wright and his overseer, and two stout negroes, parleying with Major McClure, who, with Lu and his wife standing in the doorway behind him, stood with his rifle at his shoulder, taking aim at the by no means small target offered him in the person of his wealthy neighbor.

"I command you, Major, in the name of the commonwealth, to join my posse, and assist in the recovery of a fugitive slave now harbored at McClure's, there," said Wright to me as I came up and was passing on.

"Not being a civilian, Squire," I replied, "I cannot obey a civilian's order."

"Very well, sir! very well! you are all in the tale together, I see. Neighbor McClure, thar's no manner o' use o' your trying to resist the service of this writ. Put away your rifle, and give up the gal quietly, will ye?" As the fat man spoke, the little overseer, advanced a step.

"Another foot forward, Ephraim Look, and I'll put a bullet through you quicker'n lightnin'!" shout-

ed McClure. "For more'n five year, I've been this ere poor gal's purtector, and I aint gwine to give her up, now. Don't be frightened, Lu!" he added in a lower tone, as I walked up to the door. "Ef there was fifty on 'em, instead of four, I'd lose my life afore they should have you. Major," said he, "you're welcome, back. The old whelp has kept her word you see, and sent her crowd to tear poor Lu from us; but I allow they'll git her on'y over my dead carcass. Now sheer off you Tom Wright, or I'll fire on ye as sure 's you're born! Sheer off, and don't come back agin, ef you know what's good for yourself."

"This 'ere's an outrageous violation of the law, Major McClure!" cried the squire, as he began to sidle off, out of the range of the deadly rifle, "and will make you a heap o' trouble."

Not having seen enough law in that region to give him any dread of it, the old hunter was not at all disturbed by the threat.

"I shall make out a bill of costs agin ye for the sarvices of Lu, and agin your friend, there, for her nursin' that chile; and I reckon you'll be sorry you didn't give her up. It 'll be a right smart sum, you contrary old thing, you, and ef you can't pay it, your cabin and land will be sold at public vendue. You'll hear from me!"

With these words, he called to Look and the negroes to follow, and in a few minutes they were out of sight, to the great relief of the dame, who feared, however, that worse would come of it.

This adventure while it filled Waif with terror, and the dame and her husband with sad presentiments,

had the effect to stimulate the dormant brain of Lu to a kind of glad activity. The tongue, so long silent now relieved of the paralysing spell which had bound it, compensated itself for its years of disuse, and made us all marvel by its flow of talk, wild and strange at times, and not always coherent, but always intelligible, as it gave free utterance to the pent thoughts and impulses of the morbid mind of its mistress. It was so strange to hear her talk so glibly, who had been for five years mute! But there was more than that to interest us in her rambling speech, as seated near to her, in the cabin, we formed her attentive audience. It was as if she dreamed awake, and uttered to us all the vagaries of the vision. Running through all its phantasmagoria, was the thread of her own history; her origin, her master-father, his sale of his own flesh and blood, her white sisters' scorn of her, and their seduction of her husband's love, her desperation and flight like Hagar to the wilderness, the birth of her infant, the diabolical rage of the elements, her fall beneath their fury, and then a blank—a long sleep—a living death. Of all these facts, she spoke disjointedly, interspersing the fragments with a world of irrelevant things, that yet took a sort of kaleidoscopic attractiveness of form, as she rendered them. Of the past she spoke as if it were the present, and in this vein astonished us with a vivid picture of the death of Dr. Mills, and laid bare the secret of that hitherto impenetrable mystery. To McClure and his dame, the revelation was not as satisfactory as to me, who had known that Lu was the solitary witness to that tragedy; but, dreamy as it was, her disclosure satisfied me that the

real facts of that affair were few and simple. The ill-tempered horse which the doctor drove, had balked, and, when beaten, had lain down. In the heat of his blind rage, Mills had stabbed the obstinate beast in the neck, and then fallen and died by his side, in a fit of apoplexy. In this condition poor Sam had stumbled upon the scene, and while seeking to aid the doctor, was arrested as his murderer. The soul of the wretched slave had been sent through a fiery, infamous death to another world, but I resolved that his memory, humble as it was, should be cleared from the foul blot which rested upon it. I had always asserted my belief in his innocence; now I hoped to corroborate it to others by the evidence of Lu.

Presently she took her stock of golden scales and pebbles, which she retained jealously in her own custody, and called Waifwood into the other room to play with her upon the floor. It was the last that I saw of either of them for several weeks.

Bidding only the old hunter and his wife farewell, I once more mounted my good steed to resume my surveys in the upland wilderness beyond.

I left the worthy couple with more apparent cheerfulness than I felt. I was not without considerable solicitude for the safety of poor Lu; but this and kindred objects of interest, which inclined me to linger at the cabin, had no right to detain me from my service for the Government, and, hoping for the best, I went upon my way.

Subsequently, circumstances more than justified my worst apprehensions. I had been gone only two days, when a mob of ruffians from the Burg acting

under the authority of the magistrate, (though they cared not a straw for it,) came to the cabin and took away Lu. It was during the absence of McClure, or they could not have effected it without bloodshed. She clung to Waifwood, and when, the weeping child was torn from her, struggled desperately with her brutal captors, who then dragged her away, utterly regardless of the appeals of the indignant dame.

Upon his return home, with a brace of wild turkeys as the only result of his hunt, McClure dropped into a chair wearily, and asked for Lu. As he did so, he observed the red swollen eyes of his wife and the child, and immediately started to his feet. "What?" he cried, with a faltering voice, "have they taken the poor girl?"

"Alack!" sighed the dame, the tears flowing afresh, "we shall never see her again!" and she related more at length the outrage which I have briefly mentioned.

Her old man handled his rifle nervously as she spoke, and, when she had done, pushed aside the child, and left the cabin, with an expression of countenance boding no amicable mission. Imploring him not to rush into danger—for at Wright's he would find a nest of foes—his wife would have fain detained him, but speaking to her sternly for the first time in his life, and bidding her to mind the house, the hunter shouldered his weapon and strode away.

The reader has already divined that McClure's purpose upon leaving his wife so abruptly, was to proceed immediately to the residence of the Wright's. Impelled by his indignant spirit, the brave old man

was not long in reaching the house. The door stood open and he entered. Only a negress encountered him in the hall. It was Chloe the widow of the slave, of whose death at the hands of Dr. Mills, I have spoken in an earlier chapter.

"Whar is Lu?" demanded McClure, sternly; at the same time putting his hand upon the door of an apartment, from which came the clink of glasses and several rough voices talking all at once.

"Not dar, massa; not dar!" exclaimed Chloe, in an undertone, and laying her hand upon his outstretched arm. "I'll show you whar she am. She's in dat ar room, yender."

The old man strode to the door indicated. It was locked, but with one blow of his foot, he forced it open; discovering as it flew back, the object of his pursuit, bound hand and foot, and tied to the chair in which she was sitting. In a moment the cords were out with his old jack-knife, and Lu was clasped in his arms.

"Now, my poor girl, be off with you, for thar's not a moment to lose!" said the old hunter. "Flee to the woods—to the haunts you know so well. To some hollow tree or cave in the mountains, whar none but I kin find ye, and I'll fotch ye food from day to day, till ye kin escape to the free States."

"But the child—the child?" cried Lu, in a low but impassioned tone, as she grasped his sleeve, and looked up to him with a most supplicating expression: "will you bring her to me. I care for nothing else."

"What, little Waif? She belongs to Major ——" McClure was going to say more, but was interrupted.

"Alas! alas!" exclaimed Lu, wringing her hands.

"Don't be foolish, poor girl, but fly while you kin!" rejoined McClure, with kindly force, pushing her out of the room, and looking around in some alarm lest she should be seen by unfriendly eyes.

"Promise me you will bring the child to me, sometimes!" said Lu, grasping his arm.

"Yes, yes!" he replied, scarcely knowing what he said, in his eagerness for her to go; so imminent was the danger of detention.

"God bless you!" she cried, and kissed his hand; then darted through the outer doorway, and was off like a hind.

Instinctively, a hound, which had been lying outside the portal, started to pursue her. Almost as quick as lightning, the old hunter raised his rifle to his shoulder, aimed and fired. McClure was never known to miss his mark: the dog fell dead in his tracks, and with but one glance behind her, Lu sped upon her way to the woods. Not unseen, however; for the report of the rifle had drawn the sheriff and his posse to the door.

"What does this mean?" cried the official, sternly, to McClure, who was re-loading his piece. "The girl has escaped! whar is the blood-hound?"

"As dead as a bullet kin make him!" replied the hunter, deliberately priming his old rifle.

"Some of you, follow that girl!" shouted the sheriff to three or four of his men who had started to take a look at the hound.

"The fust one that does it shall die like the dog!" cried McClure, bringing his piece again to his shoulder.

A discharge of a pistol succeeded, and the rifle fell to the ground. The sheriff then put his hand upon the shoulder which he had shattered by his shot, and said, with a profane and abusive epithet, "McClure, you are my prisoner. If you make any resistance you are a dead man."

"You cowardly villain," rejoined the old man, "you might as well kill me, as do what you have. You have broken my arm. The devil, your master, will reward you for it. But you are spiled of your game. The gal is safe, and for me, it marters little whether I die now or ten years hence."

He staggered as he spoke, and was led into the house by two of the men. The rest were then sent by the sheriff in pursuit of the fugitive Lu, with orders to employ a blood-hound, if they should be able to obtain one, on their way.

When the officer went into the room where Chloe, surrounded by a crowd, white and black, was washing the wound of the gallant old man, he was taken aside confidentially and thanked by Squire Wright for his summary punishment of McClure, whom he pronounced a malignant abolitionist. "But," added the venerable poltroon, "I reckon I wouldn't try to keep him. He is an old man and there is a right smart chance of his wound mortifying. Better let me send one o' the niggers with the wagon to take him home, and he won't die on our hands. We kin soon recover that gal Lu again, (for she aint half-witted,) and I don't bear no malice. You know, Colonel, the blessed book teaches us to be merciful."

With a compliment to the Squire's charity, the

sheriff assented, and, soon after, rode away on the road taken by the pursuers of the fugitive slave. He was too indolent a man, however, to proceed far, and, after riding two or three miles, abandoned the chase to his hirelings.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE PROPHECY FULFILLED.

DURING the livelong night which passed so sadly in the cabin of McClure, Lu was followed by her hunters. In the gray light of the succeeding morn, faint and exhausted, she entered a large and comfortable cabin, the door of which, upon the road-side, stood invitingly open. The room in which she found herself was almost dark, and she could see no one, but an inner apartment was apparent in which there was a light, as if some one of the family had risen early, or was a watcher.

Noiselessly as a cat, she approached the half-open entrance, and peered in. The sight filled her with awe. A tallow candle, burning low to its socket, feebly illuminated a group consisting of a dying man lying upon a rude bed, and three sombre looking persons standing near, hand in hand, regarding him with an aspect of sorrow, as his wrinkled, shrunken hand pointed to the hour indicated by a huge clock which in size corresponded well with a dark-colored coffin that stood upright against the wall beside it.

"Brothers, the time draws near!" murmured the

occupant of the bed. All eyes turned to the wall where the monitor of the hours began to strike, but no other voice was heard.

The men differed in height and form, but in their long, melancholy features, very closely resembled their dying brother. He was their senior, but though nearly sixty years of age, looked less careworn than they, and, though now upon his death bed, bore no trace of pain in the expression of his meek and placid countenance.

"John and Jacob," said he, "you have doubted what I foretold you three months ago: my dear brothers are you satisfied, now?"

The two elder of the three thus addressed, replied only with a deep sigh. "You were not so doubting, Jeems, for you were always confiding, and when did Isaac Ellsley ever say a thing that wasn't so?" continued the prostrate man, in a slow impressive manner. "The presentiment was as strong as prophecy. I believed then, as I know now, that this was to be my dying day. All but you, my dear brother, laughed at the warning; but Jacob, I don't blame you; nor you, John. I looked as well as ever, and never felt better, though maybe it saddened me some. I have done my share, as well as ever, (have I not?) in carrying on our little household, up to a week ago yesterday, when my strength began to fail."

The three brothers uttered their assent and added an affectionate word or two of praise.

"Yes, brothers," said the dying man, "I have been faithful to you to the end. I hope the blessed

Jesus, in whose mercy I confide, will think I have been as true to him."

"Amen!" iterated his hearers in a low tone.

"You will find my accounts of our expenditures and receipts from our plantation and household all complete up to this time," continued the first speaker, "even to Hart's work upon my coffin; for I had to have his help in making it, and the laborer is worthy of his hire, as mother used to say. Please remember what I told you about burying me in the suit I've got on. It is not good for much, as Jeems, who is our tailor, will tell you. When mother who had kept us, all together, an unbroken band, died twenty-two years ago, she left us all she had in the world, with this request, that we would not break up the household, but stick by each other, under this roof as long as we lived; and you know how gladly we complied with her desire. It was only to put brother Jeems in her place as the woman of the house, and all went on as before. He cooked and mended for us almost as well as she, though nothing could supply to us her dear face, which I hope soon to see. Don't think, Jacob, nor you John, that in praising Jeems, I would under-rate your service! In the planting, raising and care of our crops, you have done well, considering we have never owned or employed any help. Each of us has done his part; our burden has been equally borne; and what though the neighbors have despised us because we owned no slaves, and called us four old hermits, have we not been contented, united and happy?"

His hearers assented merely by a nod of their

heads, and he proceeded, though more feebly than before.

"The hand of death is upon me: I feel it at my heart. My time has come. Did I not prophecy aright? Ha, Jacob! look at the clock!" Again his hand pointed to the hour, while a smile, almost of triumph, flitted around his sunken lips. "I must talk while I can. Don't mourn when I am dead. Jeems! (said he, hearing the younger brother give vent to a suppressed sob,) don't do that. I am calm now, and it will disturb me. You three will have my share of the property. Keep together: don't quit this old cabin while life lasts. You, Jacob, can take my place in making the purchases and keeping the accounts, and reading God's Word to the rest. Read to me now, dear Jacob. The Lord is my Shepherd. The candle has gone out, has it not? But I shall not want. We should have the light of day, now; but all is dark: dark to the eye, not to the soul. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. Here," said the dying man, laying his hand upon his breast, "all is hopeful." After musing a few moments, he murmured, "Yes, dear Lord, thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me." Then a perceptible tremor passed over his frame, but the increasing shadow upon his sallow countenance was dispelled for a moment by a smile, and rising to a sitting posture, he again pointed to the huge clock, upon which the light of day now shone. He attempted to speak, but the power of utterance failed him, and with his long, bony fore-finger still indicating the hour of his decease, his spirit departed.

Suddenly, the solemn silence which succeeded, was broken by the barking of a hound, and the sound of horses' hoofs; and a woman came cowering into the room, and with a shudder at the sight of him whose death she had witnessed, crouched down between the brothers and the bedside where sat the rigid form of the lifeless man.

"For the love of God—for the love you bear the memory of your brother," she cried in the most imploring accents, "have mercy upon me! I am hunted as a slave; I'm a free woman! They are at the door. Their hound will rend me; but, worse than that I shall fall into their hands, that are more fierce than it. Oh, pity me! hide me! Don't let them take me away with them: don't let them find me!"

"They dare not enter here!" said Jacob Ellsley, turning sternly to the door, and closing it: but they were heard approaching.

"Come this way," said his brother John, raising Lu by the arm from her suppliant posture; and leading her to where the coffin stood, he placed her behind it, between it and the wall. "There; remain perfectly still, until they who are hunting thee, poor soul, have gone their way again."

Lu was not without a share of the superstitious feeling so common in that section of country in regard to corpses and coffins; but a stronger feeling now absorbed her, and she remained in the hiding-place, trembling, yet without any fear of the uncanny box which concealed her.

Then there was the hurried tramp of men in the front room, and, the next moment, the door of the

dead man's chamber was opened, discovering upon the threshold two men, one of whom held back by the collar, a panting blood-hound, while the other demanded to know where the runaway was hid.

As the ruffian spoke, he glanced at the figure on the bed, its arm outstretched and pointing to the coffin; for rigid though it was, it had fallen a little, and now seemed to indicate that object. With a start of astonishment and fear, the hunter of human kind turned his pallid face from the coffin to the bed again, and trembled with terror when he saw the occupant was dead. Nor was the stern, immovable countenances of the three brothers calculated to reassure him. His companion, too, was appalled, and even the hound cowered and slunk away with them, as they retreated backward through the doorway and hastened to re-mount.

A minute afterward, Lu, hearing the sound of their horses' hoofs, glided from her hiding-place into the kitchen, and making a fire, put on the tea-kettle, and laid the cloth upon the table for breakfast: in brief, tacitly assumed her appropriate place as the woman of the household. Neither James, whose domestic routine she thus for the time usurped, nor his brothers, interfered with this service so welcome to them in that hour of sorrow; and when she called them to the meal which she had prepared, they sat down to it silently, scarcely regarding her presence. The elder asked a blessing, then indicating to her by a motion that he wished her to wait in the chamber of the dead man, he went to the sideboard, and brought thence a plate, knife and fork, and placed, at the vacant side of the

table, where the deceased had sat for nearly half a century, another chair.

"In memory of Isaac," was all he said, as he glanced at his two brothers. They responded only by bowing slightly, but a tear stood in the eye of the younger, for he remembered how often and with what pleasure he had set that plate and chair there, himself, for that dear venerated one who had been at once a brother and a father to him, but who was now gone forevermore.

When Lu entered the chamber, not without a certain chill of the blood and quaking of the heart, she drew near to the bed and gazed upon the countenance of him who had strangely foretold, months before, while apparently in perfect health, the very day and hour of his death.

This mysterious decease is no fancy sketch: it occurred, and is still spoken of as a marvellous truth, in Greene County, Georgia. I have been in the house in which it took place, and have spoken with the surviving brothers. They were natives of the State, but singularly unlike the people in the midst of whom they passed their secluded, inoffensive lives. Only the elder, (whose duties as the out-door business man of the household took him occasionally to Greensboro, or Augusta,) ever went farther beyond the boundaries of their small plantation than the nearest neighbor's, and that rarely and not for any sociable intercourse. For this reason, and because they worshipped under their own roof exclusively, they were regarded with little favor by the Baptists, the only sect in the neighborhood, and as they would neither own slaves, nor em-

ploy slave labor, the general opinion was that they were "little better than Quakers." Their recluse habits kept them out of the way of insult from the "poor white trash," and their thriftiness and reputation for wealth, obtained for them a dubious kind of respect from the more sensible planters; but the unpardonable sin of doing their own work made them, in the mouths of many, a by-word and reproach.

Lu, of course, considered them in a very different light, and when, she beheld the placid and almost smiling countenance of the corpse, (which the brothers had prepared for the coffin while she was occupied in the kitchen,) she regarded it with a feeling of veneration, and thought to herself, "these are indeed sincere Christian men, in whom there is no guile."

Their meal was a brief one, and James soon came in, saying: "Thank you: you will take some breakfast, now;" then sat down upon the bedside and and caressed the thin locks of hair that parted upon the forehead of his brother.

Lu did as she was told. In sooth, she stood in need of food and rest, too; and when John and Jacob Ellsley came in from the yard where they had been caring for the comfort of their mules and cow, they found her head resting upon her hands on the table, and her deep, black eyes closed in sleep.

"God pity her!" said John, rinsing his hands at the sink from a gourd of water, "she has probably travelled a long road and a hard one."

"Poor child! poor child!" responded Jacob, taking the gourd from his brother, and following his example

in the use of it, "they were hunting her like a wild beast."

Fully engrossed by their severe bereavement, they left her to sleep as long as she would, and went, themselves, softly and reverently into the room where they found James Ellsley in silent prayer at the bedside. Kneeling with him, they joined their inaudible supplications to his. After a few minutes passed in that manner, they all arose together and drawing chairs near to the couch, sat down, and Jacob, opening the Word of God, read to them the beautiful Psalm, the words of which had mingled, not with entire coherence, yet encouragingly, in the dying expressions of the deceased.

When he had finished reading, Jacob placed the book under the head of the corpse, and, resuming his chair, the brothers sat wrapped in silent meditation, inanimate as statues, until the new inmate of their dwelling called them to a frugal noontide repast: then Jacob alone moved, and it was only to shake his head and motion her away. And there they remained until the end of the day, when they came forth with pale and solemn faces, and repeated the morning scene at the table; then went in silence to attend to their evening duty to the occupants of the yard and barn.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A DANGEROUS EXPERIMENT.

ON the morrow, they dug a hole in the little flower garden, which Isaac and James had made and kept in order with their own hands for many a year; and there, on the third day, they laid their brother, with rites none the less impressive because of their own utterance: but John would not have the earth thrown in upon the coffin yet, for he thought, "maybe, he only sleepeth." He would have it remain open until the Sabbath, but the people already began to be attracted to the place by the strange fulfilment of Isaac Ellsley's prophecy, and on Sunday, as there was to be preaching in the neighborhood, there would be likely to be a great crowd; to which Jacob and James had an invincible repugnance: so they prevailed upon him to close up the grave and lay the sods upon it.

Still, the curious crowd, white and black, came, and lingered around the spot all day; Lu meanwhile keeping out of sight. The speculations of the people were many and absurd, for at that period, if not at present, the mass of the white inhabitants of that portion of the country, were ignorant and unreasonable.

Not the least improbable of the stories related were to the effect, that when he departed the old man spirited away with him a slave which the catchers had followed from the Cherokee country, and nothing had been seen of her since.

The poor fugitive overheard this from her hiding place, and as she had felt all along that the hunters would not long delay to search the house, she resolved to flee, as soon as the merciful darkness should again afford her concealment from the sharp eyes of the ruthless white man. But whither? In her former flight she had headed instinctively for the mountain sources of the torrent which she had haunted so long, but the hound was upon her track too soon, and she had turned her course to the lower counties. If she only knew in what portion of the world the wandering Cale was to be found, she would have turned thither; but, then, arose the bitter thought, that if he were not dead, he had perhaps forgotten her and married another! The gloom grew gloomier upon her brow, her jaws more compressed, her hands more tightly clenched, at the picture her wild imagination drew of her own rightful husband, happy with an honored bride on whom the world had put no ban, and careless of his poor octoroon's fate while enjoying the bliss of his own; and it did not lighten, until her thoughts reverted to the sweet child, from whom she had been torn by the sheriff at the cabin of her kind old benefactors, the McClures. Then the cloud lifted, and her dark well-like eyes shone with pleasant remembrances of little Waifwood, (and perhaps of me, for 'I believe Lu loved me for the young one's sake.) "Ah!"

she sighed, "would that she were mine! Why do I love her so? But who can know her, and not love her? She is not his child. Whose then? The McClures will not tell me her story. Perhaps she is the offspring of sin and shame? But no! so pure a creature cannot have sprung from a polluted source. How my heart swells within me, at these thoughts, and yearns towards the child! Had my own helpless baby lived, it would now be about dear Waifwood's age. Had she lived?" (she almost screamed the words,) "how do I know that she is dead? how do I know that Waifwood is not her? Ha! that name! that name! There is a meaning in it that I never dreamed of until now. She was found in the forest—it means that! Oh, God!" she cried, with uplifted hands, "can she be mine? No! no! I am wild: my poor, weak, whirling brain misleads me. I must not think of it, or I shall go mad, again. Yes, I am very, very foolish, but—but I will go back to the McClures." And back she started that very night.

The way she had come, by wood and brake, was not an easy one to travel; especially as she pursued it only during the hours of darkness and rested during most of the following day; but at length, exhausted and footsore, she reached the cabin and sank down upon its threshold, too weak to enter.

It was just at the dawn of a cool, crispy, almost wintry, morning. Some negroes were already on the road to a field to pick the first cotton of the season, and she could hear the voice of their overseer addressing them as they approached; but, half-famished and weak as an infant, poor Lu had not strength enough to crawl in, out of sight.

They must have inevitably discovered the helpless fugitive, but fortunately the good old dame, within, was already astir, and hearing a groan at the door, she came and opened it. With a cry of joyful surprise, she recognized her whom she loved like a daughter, and, raising her a little from her recumbent posture, drew her into the house. Without lifting her from the floor, she called to her husband that Lu had come. The poor girl tugged at her skirt, and by a sign indicated to her to be cautious; some one was coming who had better not know that she was there. It was even so; one of the negroes entering the yard-way, just as Major McClure, rising from the bed to which he had been confined by his wound, thrust his head through the partially open door of the inner room, and cried, "Who did you say had come?"

"Only me, massa 'Clure!" said the field-hand, walking up to the portal.

The old lady was in a fit of trepidation, but the object of her solicitude drew her in front of her, and thus concealed herself from the unwelcome caller, who after an inquiry respecting the old man's health, and a remark to the effect that news had come that Lu had been seen down in Greene county, bade them a cheerful good morning and hurried away, in obedience to the command of the overseer, who shouted to him not to be lounging there.

When the negro had gone, Lu was enabled to rise, and, leaning on the arm of the commiserating dame, limped into the room where, (unable to put on his clothing,) the old man had got into bed again. His joy at seeing his child, as he called her, was no less than

her sorrow at witnessing his shattered condition. The most unmixed pleasure would probably have been felt by Waifwood, but she still lay fast asleep upon her little trundle-bed in the corner, to which the travel-worn woman soon repaired to gaze upon her, while Mrs McClure bustled about to prepare some refreshment.

"It wont do for you to venture into the kitchen, child," the dame remarked as she brought in the food and set it before her, together with a steaming cup of tea. "It aint often anybody comes, but you might be seen, you know! And now tell me, (you poor dear thing you!) where you have been, and how you dare come back agin."

"Salt down your queriosity, good dame, till the gal has had time to eat a mouthful, and swallow some o' that yere tea; will yer?" interrupted the old man.

"For the love of heaven," cried Lu, "deal frankly with me! Do not conceal from me the whole truth! Is not this child—mine? yes, MINE?"

She repeated the last words with the greater emphasis because of their look of astonishment. It had never occurred to the simple couple, that the infant to which she had once alluded in her incoherent confession was anything more than a creation of her disordered fancy, and hence her interrogatory took them by surprise, and made them fear that her brain had suffered a relapse into its former demented state.

"Don't trouble your head, now, child," said Major McClure: "your poor wits have suffered with your body. Eat your breakfast, and take a nap, and then we'll have a good talk together."

With a disappointed, dejected air, Lu turned to the refreshment offered her. While she partook of it, McClure replied to her anxious inquiry into the cause of his illness, and, in turn, she related her own adventures since she parted with him.

"But what do you intend to do here, my dear child, right in the teeth o' danger?" asked the old man.

"Do not drive me away from you!" cried Lu, imploringly.

"God forbid!" responded the trapper.

"I will hide here so carefully," said the poor woman: "never allowing myself to be seen by any one but you two, and this dear child. Your cabin is the last place in which they would think of looking for me, for they don't dream that I would dare venture back again."

"That is very true," rejoined the old lady.

"I could stay most of the time in this room; if you would let me," said Lu, "and dress your wound every day, and take care of you, my dear benefactor, until you should become quite strong again."

"Bless you, my darling!" rejoined McClure, affectionately. "It shall be so. But you need sleep: come now and lay down on the bed, right here, alongside of me, and take a nap. I am an old man: you wont mind my being here. Come now, and rest yourself."

"Do, you poor creetur!" said the dame compassionately.

With a faint smile and a word of thanks, Lu complied, and was soon fast asleep.

Presently little Waifwood awoke, with a smile rosy as sunrise, and sitting up in her trundle bed, exclaimed "Good morning, grand-pa!" Then seeing Lu, she added, "Dear me, who is that?" not recognizing her at first; but when she did so, she clapped her hands and would certainly have awakened her by her glee, had not the old lady come in, and, by a single look and motion, restrained her.

While the dame was putting on her little blue frock (a present from Mrs. Morlis,) the child could hardly stand still, she was so pleased because her playmate had come back again. Even the Lord's prayer, (usually repeated so sedately by her, each morning,) was said with a smile, and an occasional peep through her long eyelashes at the face of her sleeping friend. Deprived of her recreations with Lu, Waifwood had pined for her pet animals and birds in the forest, but now she was content without them.

Thus, a degree of their former happiness was returned to the inmates of the humble cabin, but it was not without considerable alloy. The old man's wound would have been bad enough even if he possessed the renewing power of youth, but in his case it was slow to heal and very painful. Probably, it might have mortified and cost him his life, but for Lu's incessant and judicious attention. She would apply soothing embrocations to it half a dozen time a day, and shake up and smooth down his bed and pillow as many more; and all so cheerfully, and with such words and looks of filial love, that the grateful tears often filled his eyes, and sometimes he would call her his good angel. Every day she would read to him for an hour or more,

and when he had so far improved that he could set up and use one hand easily, she would play an occasional game of draughts with him. Her gambols on the floor with the pet child served to lighten many a weary hour, but when Waifwood would express a wish (as it was natural she should, often,) for her to come and walk with her, or romp upon the grass-plot in front of the door, and the old man was reminded by his own feelings how irksome it was to be confined to the house, he would repine indignantly at the tyranny which rendered it unsafe for his dear nurse to taste the free air of heaven except under cover of the night.

Because he had never owned or worked slaves, himself, McClure was ranked by the planters as among the poor whites, whom they regarded as an inferior order of beings, (and not without reason, considering the servility and ignorance of the class,) but he was, really, quite as remarkable an exception as the Ellsley brothers, being an out-spoken, blunt man, never asking a favor, and scorning those who dared not have a vote, or an opinion, of their own. His way of life, isolated if not recluse, had kept him away from the plantations, and he had not appreciated the evils of slavery adequately until within a few years, but now he did not hesitate to express himself strongly against the injustice of the institution, and to quote the sentiments uttered by his beau-ideal of a great statesman and true patriot, Thomas Jefferson, in favor of its discontinuance. He did this with the more indignant earnestness whenever the hardship of Lu's case presented itself, and as this was frequent, especially when he was annoyed more than usual by his wound, or the

confinement consequent upon it, the cabin often resounded with his denunciations.

He was thus occupied one day, when the form of a man with a pack darkened the cabin door, and a voice, having a slightly nasal accent, saluted him with "Hello, cap'n, aint you layin' it on pooty thick?"

Fortunately Lu was in the inner room. McClure regarded a little sternly the stranger, who had lost no time in putting down his pack and helping himself to the seat which the dame had wiped out for him with her apron.

"Now," continued the new comer, "if I should go on in that air manner, speakin' agin slavery, I guess they'd hang me up, 'cause I'm a poor Yankee pedler. But who on airth was you talkin' tew? If ye've got any more folks in the house, trot 'em out; cause I'm going to show you all my pooties, and I want to sell ye all somethin'."

The fellow looked with one eye (the other was hid by a small, black patch or blind,) at the chamber door, which McClure had shut, upon hearing his salutation, but giving no heed to his questions, the old man simply responded, that they had no wish to make any purchases.

"Wall, I guess there'll be no harm in showin' on 'em," said the pedler.

"No, I don't want to see 'em," rejoined McClure, who had his own reasons for shortening the stay of the itinerant.

"Waal, it wont cost northin' jist to take a squint at em!" persisted the man, and began very coolly to open the packages on the floor.

The old hunter who had not been in the best possible humor, and was not at all prepossessed by the pertinacity of the intruder, now turned his stern regards full upon him. The pedler was a medium-sized person with a prominent nose, one piercing black eye, a thin, beardless face a mouth indicative of firmness as well as humor, and a general air of shrewdness.

"I don't spose you've got no children 'round, have ye?" he inquired, continuing to open his pack before the curious dame, but glancing furtively at the door of the chamber.

Without replying to that question, McClure asked another.—"Haint I seen your face afore, somewhar, pedler?"

A closer observer than the Major might have noticed that the man changed color, and shrank a little before his gaze. And well he might, for the pretended merchant was no other than the villain, Murrell, in disguise. He recovered his self-possession instantly, however, and judging from the unsuspecting faces of McClure and the dame, that his momentary alarm was causeless, replied carelessly, "Jist as likely as not: I've merchandized a good deal in my time."

There were eyes upon him sharper than he imagined, though. Lu was looking at him, through a crevice in the rude partition. She had been struck by something in the stranger's countenance reminding her of her husband, but the impression was transient and gave place to a feeling of suspicion and dislike, which was strengthened (she could not tell why,) by his inquiries after the child.

"I heern you had a young one," he remarked, "and I kind o' thought I'd got something that would please her fancy."

"No, nothin'; nothin'," responded McClure impatiently. "So pack up, pack up!"

"I was calculatin' to stop here over night," said the other. "I could afford to make the old lady a handsome present—"

"No!" iterated the old hunter. It was evident that he was not to be propitiated, and the discomfited stranger sullenly complied with his order. Just as he had finished doing so, his cheeks flushed, and his small black eye sparkled, for at that moment Waifwood came in, and she alone was the object of his visit. The little beauty had been to the wood for hickory nuts, and had gathered her apron full.

"Oh, grand-ma, see what a lot I've got!" she cried, as she reached the threshold; then perceiving the stranger she curtsied and looked abashed, for it was a rare thing to see a new face in the cabin.

"Waal, now, I vow!" exclaimed this skilful player of another's part (in costume and properties obtained, by the way, from an unfortunate traveller whom he had met and murdered,) "if you aint the pootiest creetur that ever I sot eyes on!"

To praise his pet was to touch the fond old man in a tender spot, and when the false pedler asked that she might walk with him a piece, to point out a path across lots to the bridge, he consented; and the more readily in order to make amends for his previous rudeness.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE DECEPTION.

WAIFWOOD, zealous in the performance of her kind office, hurried on, child-like, a little in advance of the stranger, who was well content to follow with as much speed as possible with his weighty burden. It subsequently transpired, that Murrell had lost one of his "visual orbs," and nearly his life, by the injuries received upon the occasion when we last parted with him; hence, when we say, that he had now an "eye single" to Waifwood herself, and not to the path which he affected to be looking for, the reader will understand the term to apply in a double sense.

In the meantime, laboring under a solicitude for which she could account only by a presentiment of evil, Lu had crept out of the house by a back door, and, screened by the brushwood of the roadside, stealthily followed them. In three or four minutes, (at a curve in the road, out of sight from the house,) Waifwood came to a horse and an uncovered wagon, where the false merchant bade her stop. She readily obeyed. Coming up in a moment himself, to the vehicle, he first put his pack, and the unwilling child into it, and then drove off at a rapid rate.

With a shriek of horror, Lu bounded through the hedge into the road, in pursuit. The horse required all the kidnapper's attention, and taking advantage of this, Waifwood whom he had placed upon the box of merchandise, contrived to drop from the back of the wagon into the road. Unfortunately, the cry of joy uttered by Lu caused the villain to look around, and, perceiving what had happened, to rein up and alight. The little creature was unable to take to her heels and run, having injured her ankle in her fall, and by the time that Lu came to her, the villain had her in his clutches, again.

"Ho! ho!" he exclaimed, seizing the mother by the wrist, "this is better than I expected. I heard you had cut your lucky and cleared for the free States. Couldn't part with your child, hey? But there's no time to lose. Conceal yourself in my wagon, here, and I'll soon put you on the road to freedom."

"Away, ruffian!" cried Lu, fiercely, as she shook off his grasp: then addressed to Waifwood (who, between fear and pain was white as the driven snow,) an anxious inquiry if she were hurt.

"Not much, aunty," was the reply.

"Aunty?" exclaimed Murrell, sneeringly, "she is your mother, child."

The feeling of detestation and defiance, which had filled Lu, gave way to another, not so easy to define, as the confident manner in which he said this indicated that it was no mere surmise of his; but assuming a calmness which she did not possess, she replied, "You are wrong; but I love her as if she were my own, and only death shall part us."

"I know all about it," rejoined the villain you cannot fool me. This is the child you gave birth to, in the forest, five years ago—the child of Cale Wright. That makes you start does it? Oh, I know him! I shall never forget him."

"Thank God! thank God!" cried Lu, and hugged Waifwood to her breast with almost frenzied joy and affection.

"My husband—Cale—you know him, you say? Oh, tell me, where is he?" she exclaimed. "But, no! he has deserted his poor Lu: he'll never see her again!"

"Quite the contrary!" rejoined Murrell, who now suddenly resolved upon a new plan of action. "He is comfortably located in Ohio, and wants both you and the child to come to him."

"Oh, do not deceive me!" cried Lu.

"Deceive you!" exclaimed the traitor, with well-affected feeling, "Deceive a woman!"

"But you would have stolen Waifwood!" she remarked, doubtfully.

"Because the McClures would never have relinquished her, unless to Cale Wright, in person," said the thief.

"They know, then, that he is this child's father?" said Lu.

"Certainly they do, but they have no idea of parting with her. They want her for their own. She would become useful to them," replied Murrell; and added, "I couldn't hope to get her away with their consent, so I have taken her without. So you see, my dear little girl, I was only carrying you to your own

father, after all! I had no idea that you were there, madam, or I should have first sought a private interview with you. I am not what I appear. This dress and cart serve only as means to facilitate my enterprise for your escape to your husband, who, after many fluctuations of fortune, is at last prepared to receive his wife and child to his eager arms, and establish a happy household."

"My God! can this be true?" exclaimed the too credulous woman; wishing with all her soul that it was.

"Do you still doubt me?" said the deceiver, with a tone and look as though he felt hurt by her want of faith.

"Don't go with him, aunty!" pleaded Waifwood: "Oh, do take me home!"

"Then you don't want to see your papa, dear?" said the pedler, in his blandest manner. "This parcel," he added, turning to Lu, "contains my friend's, your husband's, miniature, with a few lines to you—"

"Oh, let me have it!" cried his victim, interrupting him, and eagerly extending her hands for the package.

"There is no time now, and this is not the place to open it," responded Murrell, retaining it. "We have tarried too long already. Somebody may come along. Come into the woods with me and assume the the Indian costume which I have brought.—"

"I will not, until I have the picture," said Lu, again interrupting. "It is the only warrant there is that you really came from my husband."

"Ungrateful woman!" cried the rascal, with an

air of profound chagrin; "was it for this I have undertaken a hazardous enterprise for your good? Go; leave me! you and your child, return to the cabin where you are in continual peril of being re-taken. I will retrace my long and weary journey, and recount to your disappointed and broken-hearted husband how you rejected the faithful heart, and the happy home, he offers you."

"Oh, no, no! forgive me! I do not refuse," exclaimed Lu, with great emotion.

"For my own poor part," said the artful dissembler, without appearing to notice what she said, "I don't value all the pains I have been put to, and all the risk I run of being arrested under the disreputable charge of kidnapping a couple of slaves, (for being your child, this young one belongs to your master, of course;) but I confess I feel—a—a—feeling of deep disappointment and sorrow." As he spoke, a tear stood in his eye, and he nursed the crocodile demonstration with his handkerchief for a few moments until satisfied that it had made an impression.

Thoroughly deceived by his hypocritical pathos, and alarmed by his suggestion in parenthesis, that little Waifwood herself might be consigned to hopeless bondage, Lu again begged the wretch's forgiveness, and added that she would accompany him; but she had "something valuable at home, which she had better—"

"Take," interrupted Murrell, supplying the word. "Of course. Is it clothing or jewelry?"

"It is gold," she answered, unguardedly.

His eye sparkled, but concealing his avariciousness,

he rejoined, that though her husband had furnished him with funds, a little more would do no harm, and she had better get it.

"I will go home now, with Waifwood, and come with her again, to this spot, a little after dark;" said Lu; and she added in an undertone not to be heard by her daughter, "the child you see, is afraid of strangers. When she sleeps, she can be carried without opposition."

A transient feeling of distrust flashed through the corrupt heart of the scoundrel, and he would have fain held Waifwood as a hostage for her mother's reappearance at the time and place named, but the little one withdrew her hand from his, with a shudder, and clung instinctively to Lu's skirt.

"Well, well, be it so," he responded; "but for your life don't disappoint me, to your own ruin! I happen to know, that a requisition is to be made upon McClure for this young one, to-morrow."

It is not necessary, perhaps, to say, that this last stimulus to the poor, deceived creature to keep her word, was, like all the rest of his statements, a sheer fabrication. The child's unfortunate origin was a profound secret still, and might never have become known to the elder Wright and his wife, had he not subsequently revealed to them what he overheard, in his disguise as Wakeelah, on the night of the storm, in the cabin of McClure.

"Now you will not want the miniature as a warrant that I came from your husband," Murrell ventured to suggest, with a smile. He felt that he hazarded something in making the remark, but supposed she

would magnanimously waive the production of this evidence of his no longer doubtful fidelity; and her impression that he had the picture would serve his purpose just as well as if he really possessed it. It is with some such little excess of dissimulation that the devil often trips up his devotees, and this, the acme of his effrontery in the deception of Lu, had like to have blocked his diabolical game, for mindful only of her desire to see a portrait of him whom she loved better than all the world, she eagerly demanded that it should be given to her.

Murrell now found that his hardihood had carried him a step too far, but the evil genius by whom he was patronized had not yet deserted him. He had heard, formerly that, with the exception of a difference in complexion, he bore in his countenance an extraordinary resemblance to the man whom of all others, he most hated, viz: Cale Wright. That similarity had become modified by time, and almost entirely destroyed by his wearing a patch over one eye, but the parcel, which he now held in his hand, contained a miniature of himself taken six or seven years before, and the painter in accordance with the flattering art of the time, had given this his "fetch" a fresher color, and hair of some fancy hue not known to the natural capillaries.

Hence, with what Macauley styles "a fine audacity," he ventured to deliver this, his own miniature, to Lu; accompanying it with the remark, that she would find that her husband had changed considerably in five years, for the chills and fever of the west, and long separation from his dear wife and child, had

worn upon him very seriously; "but when he sees you, my dear," he added cheeringly, (and he chucked her under the chin, as he spoke,) "the fallow clouds will vanish from his countenance, and it will be radiant with conjugal love, and paternal joy!"

"God in heaven bless you!" exclaimed Lu, gratefully, as she took the parcel; "you have filled a sad heart with the brightest hopes. I will be sure to be here. Come, my child!"

"Aunty, I can't walk!" said Waifwood, piteously: "my ankle pains me so!"

"Poor thing! poor thing!" murmured Lu compassionately, as with a kiss of warm affection, and an expression of sympathy, she took the little one in her arms and started for the cabin.

The fallow countenance of the pretended pedler was not without a shade of suspicion as he looked after her for a few moments, then led the horse and wagon deeper into the wood, beyond the observation of any passenger upon the road, should any chance to come that way.

"That was a bold stroke!" said he to himself, "giving her that old miniature of mine for his; ha! ha! She wont find the letter I spoke of, from Cale, but I can easily pretend that I have either mis-laid or lost it. By Jove! I deserve success for my ingenuity, and if I should be prospered in this enterprise, I can sell that woman and child for three thousand dollars, quick. If I don't make a trade with Collier, I'll take them to South Carolina, and light on some rich cove that'll take a fancy to them, and my market is

made. And then ho! for Europe and a fashionable tour of the Continent!"

Leaving the bold kidnapper to his own manner of passing the time, until his victims return to him after nightfall, we will follow the betrayed mother and child to the cabin.

She had been missed by the old couple, and when she entered, they reproved her with some warmth for venturing out at the peril of being identified and seized. They changed their tune however, when they discovered that Waifwood could hardly stand, from the effect of her hurt. And how, thought Lu to herself, shall the accident be accounted for? It was simply to say, that the child had rode with the stranger a little way and sprained her ankle in getting off of the wagon. The honest folks were satisfied with this explanation, but expressed much solicitude about the injury. Their sincere affection for their darling was more obvious that day than ever, and Lu who felt that she was enjoying their society for the last time, was not without some twinges of conscience when she thought how lonely they would be without Waifwood.

At the same time, it satisfied her, that they would never give their consent to her taking the child away to share her precarious fortunes. There were trials awaiting her, she believed, for the season was now advanced to the beginning of winter, and she and her child would have to endure cold as well as hunger in their hegira; laboring at all times under anxiety, too, lest they should be captured and held to life-long slavery; but her mind was irrevocably fixed upon the

(to her, so great) enterprise, and come weal, come wo, she was resolved to abide by it.

She had examined the 'precious packet as soon as she had an opportunity to be alone, and her disappointment was two-fold. There, certainly, were the features of her husband, but darker and more wrinkled, and the frank, generous, confiding expression of the eyes and mouth had changed for the worse, she thought. If she had been told that it was the portrait of some relative of his, she would readily have admitted a strong family resemblance, on the mother's side, and been better pleased with it; but as it was, she regarded it as a very unsatisfactory likeness. She was disappointed, too, at not finding, enclosed with it, the promised note, but this she attributed to an inadvertent omission which she presumed her husband's agent would supply, when she should see him again.

And now with her whole soul she longed for the shades of night to descend, and sleep to come to all eye-lids in the cabin but her own. She loved the worthy pair as though they were her own father and mother, and was profoundly grateful for their untiring kindness, but she could do them no good by remaining, and to entrust her secret to them would but endanger their peace: so she justified the act of stealing away from them under cover of the darkness, without a farewell word at parting. She would have left a few lines, for them to find in the morning, beseeching them to forgive her sudden departure with the child, and assuring them that she would write to them when she should have reached the happy home which awaited her, but there were no pen and ink in the

cabin; so emptying half of her little store of gold dust into a new buckskin pouch which she had made for the old man, and breathing a short prayer at their bedside, supplicating God's blessing upon them, she took the sleeping Waifwood in her arms, and departed. The chilly air was grateful to her burning temples and oppressed lungs, and with a farewell glance at the old cabin, she pressed forward, in a rapid walk to the appointed place of meeting with the false friend.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

SOLD INTO SLAVERY.

Lu loved her lost husband with an intensity characteristic of her earnest nature. What a world of happiness she looked forward to, in anticipation, as she set out in company with the treacherous guide who had promised to re-unite in a free land their long sundered family!

By arrangement, the dealer in human flesh—a blear-eyed, rum-visaged wretch named Collier—had been awaiting the arrival of Murrell two or three days. It was not every day that a likely young slave, worth a thousand dollars or more, was to be had for half the money; and, to obtain her, he could afford to tarry a little on his way to South Carolina, and a market.

Late one night, (indeed, it was nearly morning) Murrell stopped with the tired Lu, and the little one that slept in her arms, at a log cabin situated at the outskirts of the town. In quick response to his loud summons, a large, coarse red-faced man came to the door, and welcomed him with a grasp of the hand. Then, lighting a candle, he showed the poor shivering woman into a fireless room, and shutting the door

upon her, patted her false friend upon the shoulder as he ushered him into an apartment where the embers still glowed in the monstrous chimney-place.

"Ugh!" ejaculated the new-comer, with a shiver; "I am cold enough for another fit of those infernal chills of mine. We have travelled a long stage, to-night, and the weather must have made ice. Put on some light'ood, Dan, or I shall have the shakes: and give us a smell of your whiskey jug; for you're in luck, old feller!"

In a jiffy, an armful of pine stuff was blazing above the embers, and Dan Collier turned to a cupboard for the liquor.

"Wall, I allow you deserve a drink," said he, as he handed it to the kidnapper: "You have brought me one more bird that I counted on. Whar did you get her?"

Murrell then related such portions of his enterprise as he deemed it proper that the slave-driver should know. "The pair will sell well together," he added, in conclusion, "and if I had your facilities for disposing of them, I wouldn't look at less than a couple of cool thousands for such a mother and child."

"They're too white by half, and know too much, I'm afraid," rejoined Collier, dubiously, as he took a pull at the jug, and sat down, with it between his bare feet, before the fire.

"They'll suit your Suc-Carlina aristocrats all the better for that," responded Murrell.

"They are whiter than you are, yourself!" sneeringly retorted the slave-dealer. "You haven't any of that blood in you, have you?"

The response was a curse, and the flash of a glittering blade; but the threatened blow was not given.

"Stop!" cried Collier, raising his hand, "I was only joking. You're as rash as an Injun!"

"It is Indian blood that darkens my skin," rejoined the other, as he put up his knife, sullenly: "I am proud of it! A war-chief transmitted it to me, and it bids me never to brook an insult, nor forgive an injury. If I were not true to its teaching, you would not have the pleasure of getting that child into your possession."

"Oh, I meant no offence," said the slave-driver; "so let's drink to old times!" and turning out a glass of whiskey, he handed it to the riled customer, opposite, who drank in silence and passed back the cup, again.

"What am I to give you for the two?" inquired Collier.

"Fifteen hundred dollars," was the reply.

"Fifteen hundred devils!" exclaimed the dealer, gruffly. "You charge as much as if you could give me a clean title to them!"

"And so I can," was the rejoinder. "Here is a bill of sale from the last owner, duly certified."

"It looks all regular, and will serve my turn," said Collier, as he examined the paper which the other had handed to him. "Of course it's a forgery, but my South Carolina customers are not particular about the documents; only, when there's a doubt, they want a hundred or two taken off, you see. I'll give you fourteen hundred for 'em, cash on the nail:" and he em-

phasized his offer by producing a large pocket-book, perfectly corpulent with its load of bank-notes.

"Not a dollar less than fifteen hundred," replied Murrell, shaking his head, resolutely.

"What can I do with the critters?" asked the dealer, as if utterly, at a loss to imagine a market for the proposed purchase, though in his heart he believed he could double his money on them.

"Pshaw!" replied Murrell: "with the aid of a little finery, and daintier living, my Indian girl, (alluding to Lu's disguise,) would be fit for the harem of the Sultan, himself. You know many a rich old nabob in South Carolina who would consider her cheap at three thousand. And he would be glad to give a handsome price, too, for the child, in order that he might raise her to be her mother's successor, when he shall have tired of the old one."

"Well, let us toss up to see whether it shall be fourteen or fifteen," said Collier.

"Go ahead!" rejoined Murrell, carelessly.

They tossed up a copper, and Lu and Waifwood were sold to the dealer for one thousand four hundred dollars. Whereupon, he produced the amount in fourteen notes of the Bank of the State. Then, they sealed the infernal bargain with a drink.

"You have won a hundred on the turn of a cent," said Murrell; "and now I will bet you as much more on the toss of the dice."

"Agreed!" responded Collier, who was fond of gambling at all times, and especially when he was a little sprung.

They began to play forthwith, and in the excite-

ment of heavy stakes, Murrell forgot his fatigue and want of sleep. The result was, that with the aid of loaded dice, he won every dollar that the man had with him. Stupefied with his losses and the liquor, the South Carolinian then fell asleep upon the floor.

A portion of the foregoing facts, soon transpired through the subsequent admissions of Collier, himself, but it was years after their occurrence that all the circumstances came to my knowledge.

Murrell had purloined the treasure-trove of Lu, and before any of the occupants of the cabin were awake, he departed silently and unseen from the place, with all his ill-gotten spoils.

When Collier was awakened by the ordinary occupant of the house, (a negro, who had passed the night in the kitchen,) and discovered that both his money and its winner had taken the wings of the morning, his first thought was that Lu and the child had flown away with him. With a curse upon his unlucky stars, the slave-dealer went to the door of the room where he had left the objects of his tender care, a few hours before. With a sinking heart the poor man looked in, and was filled with lively satisfaction, to find both still sleeping. Their fatigue had been excessive, and nature would have its dues.

Collier let them remain there through the day, and, with all the bluff kindness of manner which he could assume, supplied them with food and drink. Lu had heard from one or the other of the men, that the pretended friend of her husband, who had been thus far the conductor of her journey, had gone on in advance to Savannah, to speak for their passage on board a ves-

sel bound to New Orleans, whence they were to proceed (so the rascal, Murrell, had told her,) up the river, in a steamboat, to Cincinnati, where Cale would be ready to receive them: so without a suspicion of foul play, but full of pleasing anticipations, which she communicated to Waifwood to her great delight, she waited once more for the mantle of night to descend upon the earth, to enable them to renew their flight.

They arrived in Savannah in safety, at length, and went with Collier aboard a small vessel, which set sail, the next morning, not for New Orleans but for Charleston, S. C., where they disembarked and were conveyed in a close carriage to a hotel, kept by a brother of the trader.

The speculator in his fellow beings well knew the advantages of dress, and in an hour or two after their arrival, brought to their room a mantua-maker, well-skilled and tasteful at her trade, "though only a quadroone." Collier was careful that nothing should transpire during this transaction, to inform Lu that she was not in New Orleans. Indeed he made it a point to keep her in ignorance of all the facts of the fraud, which had been practised upon her, until he should have got her off his hands. She was made to believe, that it was by her husband's affectionate consideration that she and her child were now to be arrayed in far more expensive and fashionable dress than they had ever worn before, and though she would have been entirely contented with plainer attire, she would not have been a woman had she not been glad to enhance her personal attractions in the eyes of the man whose love, she had feared, was forever estranged from her.

Children are always pleased with new clothes, and little Waifwood was delighted with the pretty silk frock, hose and gaiters which were provided for her, she thought, by the dear, kind father whom she was so soon to see.

“Dan Collier was not the man to do things by halves,” (he used to say of himself,) and not satisfied with dressing his new slaves well, he had them liberally supplied, in their room, with the most luxurious and nourishing viands that the hotel afforded. Meagre in variety, and coarse in quality as is the fare of most towns in the interior of the southern states, good living may be had in the sea-board cities, and especially in Charleston; so Lu and her child lacked for nothing that could improve their good looks, and better fit them for their owner’s purpose. In the meantime, revelling in blissful expectation, the mother and child were satisfied with Collier’s excuse for delay, viz: that the steamboat, in which they were to take passage, was not yet quite ready to receive them on board.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE PURCHASER.

IN a room in a wing of the same hotel there was then sojourning during "court week," a gentleman, who, without knowing her, had become suddenly very much interested in poor Lu, as we shall presently show.

The personage in question was no less a man than Judge Gascon, a member of one of the wealthiest and most aristocratic families in that proud state. In his young manhood, Gascon was a gallant beau and cavalier, too vain of his handsome figure, and descent from an old Huguenot race, to marry before attaining his meridian, and too much wedded, then, to his bachelor habits to be willing to change them. In fact, he had not ceased to flatter himself, even at the age of fifty, that few ladies in South Carolina of any considerable taste and refinement could refuse him any place in her affections that he chose to occupy. At sixty, Judge Gascon was still a fine-looking man: tall; portly (yet not too much so,) and with no defect of form, save a little roundness of shoulders; a result of his rather

sedentary life, not fully repaired by his exodus abroad for a few years as minister to a foreign court; and this he partially concealed by allowing his gray curly locks to grow to an unusual length. He wore no beard, and there was a womanly softness in his finely-chiselled and very regular, but not effeminate features. No one ever presumed to doubt his courage, for he had fought three duels in his time—one of them with Gov. H—e, now his fast friend—but he was regarded as a man of sentiment, and a very fine poet. At least such was the appreciation of his literary merits in his own State, though based almost entirely upon a pretty song, which somebody or other had set to pretty music, (and some translations) now forgotten, from the French and Italian. In those days, it required only a small amount of literary performance to make a great fame for a Southern man in his own rather illiterate portion of the country. Gascon was neither a scholar nor a poet in the fullest sense of the term, but he possessed some acquirements, united to a good deal of natural taste for literature and the fine arts; and being both sprightly and dignified, as well as lavish of his means, he was just the man to be popular in South Carolina, or any where else; but he was more fit for a belles-letters professorship than for the bench, and for an Aspasia's boudoir than either. A beau at thirty, a voluptuary at fifty, what was he likely to have become at the age of seventy, when we find him enjoying his cigar and after-dinner bottle of white port in the hotel where Lu was quartered, upon the occasion described? A little less erect than at sixty, a little more round-shouldered, a little more venerable in his locks, it may

be, but not a whit less the slave of his life-long passion for the women: and, what would have been singular in any other community, none the less respected, and glorified by his admirers. Even his friend, "the great Nullifier," Calhoun, exemplary as he was, himself, in his habits, found no fault with those of Judge Gascon. In truth, he had the "happy faculty" of seeming to be much better than he was, and the hideous proportions to which his vice had grown was apparent only to God, and those good and bad angels who watch over and influence every one's career.

And was this sprightly and brilliant personage entirely at ease in his conscience, and resigned to his decline towards the grave? By no means. He tried to avoid thinking of it, but the reflection would sometimes intrude, "My life is fast closing, and what account can I render of it to the eternal Judge from whose decision there is no appeal? A life given over to lust, which, infirm and impotent though I am, still holds me in its unyielding thrall. My God! will it follow me to my grave? and worse, oh infinitely worse, will it make part and parcel of me in the world beyond? A goading passion, without the means of gratifying it!"

Such was the gist of the old rake's rumination as he sat alone in his room in the hotel with his wine and fragrant cigar; but swallowing the reflection and drowning it with a glass or two of port, as he heard a knock at the door, he called out "Come in!" and taking up an elegant volume of Tasso which lay upon the table, appeared as if he were perusing it.

A black slave entered at the summons, bearing cards upon a salver.

"My nephew Gustavus, and Miss Duprez," said the Judge, as he glanced at the address of each through a glass which dangled from his neck across his immaculate ruffle, whereon glistened a large diamond, (for his Honor, old as he was, dressed as much as ever;) "ask them to come in."

The negro bowed low, and withdrew. "The eminent scholar, poet, judge and gentleman," as the Charleston press was fond of styling him, then brushed a speck of lint from the superb dressing-gown which he wore, arranged his soft gray hair, at the glass, a moment, and walked up and down the apartment with one eye upon the Tasso in his hand, and the other upon the door.

After the lapse of two or three minutes, his nephew entered, smiling and nodding to the rather pretty red-haired young lady who hung upon his arm, (not for support as she was taller than he,) as he remarked in an undertone upon his uncle's fondness for good living.

The young couple were received with almost courtly politeness, combined with a charming suavity of manner; for the Judge prided himself upon his high-breeding, especially in the presence of the ladies.

When they were seated, he apologized for his cigar and dressing-gown, but presumed that so sensible and angelic a creature as Miss Duprez would pardon it, as this was the hour of his siesta. Then she, in turn, embarrassed by his deferential address and compliments, colored to carnation, and made many excuses for intruding at such a time.

"You were about taking your post-dinner nap, Judge, perhaps?" suggested the nephew, who was an under-sized young man of twenty-two or three, fashionably clad in black broadcloth, and high-heeled boots. "I am sorry to have disturbed you."

"No, no, my dear boy, not at all; not at all," was the reply; "naps for those who need recuperation! Thank the Lord, my health is as fresh as yonder rose. I retain the vigor and vivacity of youth marvellously. Possibly, I may show my age, but—" and here he paused for a compliment which custom had rendered necessary to him.

"My dear sir!" protested the young man, "don't mention such a thing. I cannot discover a single horrid wrinkle." (Which was true, for he was near sighted.) "Time has skipped you; or you have been drinking that miraculous water that De Soto sought!"

"So I think!" lisped the lady.

"Ah, you flatter me!" responded the Judge. "But speaking of water, here is my marvellous fountain!" and he pointed to the wine. "Come, take a glass of white port with me. Miss Duprez, you will not refuse! It is of my own importation."

He rewarded her compliance by drinking to her health. "Gustavus," he said, as he replaced his glass upon the table, "you should be the happiest of mortals, since you are honored with the love of this angel!"

"Oh, Judge Gascon!" exclaimed the lady, with a deprecating look and blush.

"I protest," cried the Judge, "that when we make a monarchical government in South Carolina—if that

time should come—we ought to elect Georgia Dupres its Victoria! Of course you have read the new book?"

"The Partisan Leader? yes, sir," replied the nephew. "What is your opinion of it? I hope you approve it!"

"Professor Tucker's theory is a brilliant one, certainly," replied the Judge; "and I wish, heartily, that it could be put into practice. My friend, John C. Calhoun does not say so in as many words, but the idea of a new and stronger form of government than the American federal Union underlies his political principles; and his only objection to its development is that when the great test was put to the people in 1832, he found them generally unprepared for it. An unexpected and mortifying discovery to him it was, as I well knew, though I was abroad at the time. In sooth, I regretted his disappointment almost as much as he did."

It will be understood by the attentive reader, that Judge Gascon unblushingly admitted, that, though acting as a foreign minister for the United States, he was entirely willing to see his Government overthrown, and a monarchy established in one or more of the Southern States.

"We are essentially a different people from the North," observed Gustavus. "Their employments and habits are all herdish, mercenary and vulgar. If we despise our own King street merchants, surely, we have no congeniality for fraternization with the traders and mechanics of the Eastern States!"

"The Yankees among us scorn their countrymen,

at home, as much as we do," remarked Miss Duprez: "at least they talk as if they did."

The Judge laughingly observed, that "those fellows were crafty foxes, seeking to please the Southerners by taking that tone. They were treacherous time-servers, faithful to nothing but their own selfish ends."

"What will Calhoun do in our State convention for making a new Constitution, think you, Judge?" asked the nephew.

"Probably confine himself to defining more clearly our State rights and optional independence of the Federal Government," was the reply; "for he thinks that many years must elapse before the public mind will have become prepared for the full fruition of his plan of a gigantic Southern commonwealth. But a truce to politics! here's metal more attractive, as Hamlet says:" and he turned to the young lady, who was turning over the leaves of his Tasso.

"Are you fond of the divine poet, Miss Duprez?" he asked.

"Passionately!" she replied. "I think him less melancholy than Dante; though both are sweet, and so rich in graceful images!"

The Judge assented, with a compliment to her critical discernment, (for he went upon the hypothesis that every woman loves flattery,) and then began to analyze the style and peculiarities of each; quoting, ever and anon, the original Italian text; and, now and then, condemning this or that translation: to all of which his female admirer listened with open-mouthed attention: congratulating herself in the meantime upon

her great good fortune in being treated to so delectable a literary feast. How her fellow-members of the "Catherine Herschell Society" would envy her if they only knew it!

The nephew seemed to hear, but he knew little of either of the two poets, and cared less, for his mind was pre-occupied; and when the old man, warming with his theme and the evident admiration of his fair *vis-a-vis*, began to recite freely from Petrarch and Boccaccio, he took the liberty to saunter to a window from which he could see a stage coach which had just been driven into the yard of the hotel.

The wing of the house formed an angle commanding an easy view of a portion of the main building, and it was the most natural thing in the world for him to glance at an adjacent window; but when he saw a lady, within, engaged, with the assistance of a maid, in dressing, of course he ought to have looked another way. He was the nephew of his uncle, however, and the temptation to gaze his fill would have been irresistible, but fortunately he was suddenly self-reminded that he had no time to spare.

"My dear Judge, you will excuse me," said he turning to his brilliant relative, who had paused to take breath, "but in the pleasure of hearing you talk, I had like to have forgotten that I came to do a little for myself, and it is of importance, perhaps, that I should lose no time about it. You have unlimited influence with the president-elect: Van Buren, the northern man with southern principles, was elected by the southern vote. You helped, in a quiet way, very efficiently (though he and you friend Calhoun love

each other as fire loves powder,) and he will grant you anything. Now I happen to want a secretaryship to a foreign legation: surely you can command as small a favor as that?"

"Certainly, certainly, my dear boy!" replied his uncle, patting him upon the shoulder: "but are you not a little premature in your application?"

"It is well enough to be in season, Judge. There will be a crowd after these places by-and-by," answered the young man.

"But the South must of course have the preference, as usual. You know we have always had the lion's share of the offices, and the bold, defiant, proud State of South Carolina exacts the respect and deference of all parties. Mr. Van Buren will grant anything I ask. However, you may be right in making an advance upon competitors. I will write a few lines to the newly-elected President and you may start for Washington to-night if you like. In the meantime, leave this fair lady, your intended bride, at home, with the assurance that she shall never lack for a smart cavalier as long as I am in her vicinity; ha, ha, ha!" and he laughed merrily at his own conceit, which pleased Miss Duprez exceedingly, as was evident by her smiles and blushes.

"Ah, my dear Judge!" exclaimed the nephew, smiling, "you are still the same gay Lothario as ever! But take care and not look over into your neighbor's window too much, or you may find a new goddess will steal away your admiration for this one!"

"Impossible! what do you mean?" said the beau, eagerly, and went to the window indicated.

"She is gone now," cried Gustavus laughing: "but come, Judge, write me the letter of introduction to Van Buren, and I will be off with the mail."

So the missive was penned without further delay, and with hasty but cordial adieux, (in the course of which the young lady was honored with a kiss from the venerable admirer of Petrarch's sonnets,) the young affianced pair departed.

"A perfect Hebe, Judge!" cried the young man, and his laugh resounded from the hall, as they left the old man to his wine—and his window!

"Hebe?" and Gascon glanced; mechanically, at a picture of that goddess which adorned the wall; then turning to the view against which his nephew had laughingly warned him, he raised his glass to his eye: "By Hercules!" he gasped, (for it almost stopped his breath,) it is Venus rising from the waves." The pulsations of his heart suddenly increased from sixty to a hundred, and his face grew pale with excitement. "Can she have no suspicion that she is observed?" thought the aged Sardanapalus to himself. She don't look as if she had. So much the better. I shall enjoy this luxury the longer. I never saw her before: probably a stranger from the North. She has rather a Cuban or South American complexion, though. Perhaps a lady from Brazil. By Jupiter Ammon!" he cried, and wrung his hands in an ecstasy of admiration, "there's a bust for you! Thrice happy dressing-maid! What would I not give to be in that negress's place? Who can this delectable creature be? Perhaps, a member of the Spanish Opera, on her way from Havana to New York. She has the true Castilian

head and neck, with an eye-brow, and mouth like that charming Andalusian *senorita* I saw and loved (for a month,) on the banks of the Guadalquivir! I must find out who she is, or I shall not get a wink of sleep to-night. She is gone! Oh, goddess of my idolatry, appear! appear! No, no!" he added, after waiting a few moments, and straining his old eyes to see farther into her room, "she will not come back! Yes, there she is in full dress. Probably she will ride out. I'll slip on my overcoat—no, I won't: it makes a man look older: I'll don my mulberry frock, and go down on to the walk to give her a closer scrutiny as she passes out. How do I look?" and he went to the mirror. "*Comme il faut*? Not exactly!" and he ran his fingers a little nervously through his long hair. Where's my powder? There, that will do. Now, for an artistical touch with my rouge on the lips! How a rosy mouth rejuvenates the countenance! Would that some genius of health would give us a polish for the eyes and a cure for crow's feet!" he sighed. "*Mais n'importe!* Now for my frock. Stay, I will change my vest: the flowered satin looks more cheerful. Good: that looks well. Where's my boots? Confound that porter; he has not returned them with the customary afternoon polish!" and he rang the bell.

CHAPTER XL

HUMAN CHATTELS.

A MIDDLE-AGED negro appeared in answer to the Judge's summons, with the boots in question.

"Julius, you image of ebony, come to this window!" was the stern response to his apology. The poor fellow opened his eyes wide, and made a hasty calculation of how much a fall from that height would hurt him; for he feared the Judge intended to kick him out; but he was immediately relieved by the inquiry, "Who occupies that room over there?"

"A lady and child, your Honor," he replied. "They come under care massa Dan Collier. You know massa Dan, Judge? I knows him!" he muttered to himself: and he had reason to, for the slaver had bought, one after another, four of his children, and sold them away from him forever, one in Mississippi, one in Louisiana and two in Texas.

"Dan Collier, hey?" exclaimed Gascon. "Can it be a relative of his?"

The negro was proceeding to express an opinion in response, but the Judge cut him short by tossing his slippers at his head, and bidding him to get out, a

command which the negro lost no time in obeying; but he was as imperiously called back again, to receive a quarter-dollar and (and what he valued almost as much) a kind word from the great man, who was in the main good-natured enough, especially to the lowly: and generous to a fault.

"Help me on with my frock, Julius," said the Judge. "That will do. Give it a little brush. There, there; that will do." And he put on his hat daintily, and took his natty walking-stick. "Now, how do I look, boy?" said he, scrutinizing his figure carefully in the full-length mirror.

"Jis as young as you did, Judge, when I seed you open the ball what General McDuffie guv to de foreign prince, (I disremember his name,) twenty years ago!" replied Julius, smiling, and rubbing his hands.

"You're a great flatterer, you rascal," rejoined the old beau, laughing complacently, "but lock up my room, when I am gone, and take care you don't disturb anything. I'm too much in a hurry now to stop, Julius." And off he went, leaving, with characteristic carelessness, many valuables exposed here and there—among the rest, his purse, which he had overlooked—to tempt the poor darkey.

"De lor suz!" soliloquized the slave, "ef de Judge aint done gone and luff his money! and dar's his gold watch, and here's two or free rings, and his gold snuff-box, set with diamonds! Now ole nigger, ef you want a big fool, you'd freeze to all dese yere wallybles and put out for de glorious land ob liberty whar de north star shines on nobody but freemen!"

He sat down in the luxurious cushioned easy-chair

at the table recently occupied by the rich man, and took the jewelled box into his hands, but his thoughts were wandering to those far off, unknown places, which held treasures far more valued by him than the diamonds that glittered in vain to his dreamy eyes.

Of what account is a negro's tear? One has fallen upon the bijou which he holds in his hands, and haply some angel invisibly regarding the poor fellow's affectionate sorrow, may think as much of the sheen of that briny drop as of the prouder jewel's glare.

"Well, well," said Julius, rising, and putting down the box, "bress de lord, de crooked places will be made straight some day. Dis yere life aint for always, and dar aint no seperations after we done got to heben! You must take up your cross agin, Julius, and wait patiently for de good time on de other side of Jordan." Then heaving a deep sigh that seemed to come from his boots, he emptied a half-filled glass of wine into his capacious mouth, and withdrew; locking the door after him.

Gascon's eager desire to know the fair stranger, (who, as the intelligent reader has already divined, was no other than Lu,) tallied exactly with Collier's aim. When, therefore, upon descending to the walk with his prize, the slave-driver saw the Judge standing near the barouche which awaited them, he chuckled to himself "It's all right! It's all as I could wish—if I only manage my cards properly."

"But a difficulty arose: Lu expressing an invincible repugnance to a display, which she thought neither wise nor in good taste. Not entirely at ease in her elegant dress, even in the privacy of her own

room, to ride so conspicuously, in a showy open carriage, the observed of all observers, would have been absolutely painful to her shrinking, retiring nature, and though grateful to her present protector for his apparent kindness, she persisted in declining a seat in that ostentatious vehicle.

Availing himself of this opportunity, Judge Gascon stepped forward and shook Collier's hand with more cordiality than usual.

Probably nothing short of the motive then actuating him could have induced the high-born and haughty Gascon to show the smallest modicum of politeness to this man; for Dan's failings were patent throughout his native city; and, though he was believed to have amassed some property by shrewd and successful slave-traffic, his position was decidedly equivocal in a community whose society prided itself upon its chivalry and high-breeding.

The Judge had bought slaves of him, in his time, but when the trade was effected, and the money paid, their temporary intercourse was at an end. Now, however, the rich man's dominant lust led him to be remarkably civil: and he felt more than repaid by a sort of semi-introduction to the object of his pursuit.

"This is Judge Gascon," said Collier aloud to Lu, and added in an undertone, "a good friend to our enterprise; but don't refer to it."

The gallant septuagenarian raised his hat and bowed in the most courtly manner, which the object of his undisguised admiration acknowledged with an embarrassment that was unspeakably relieved by a request from her pseudo friend that she should retire to her

room, until another carriage should have been brought to the door.

"What a lovely child!" exclaimed the Judge, as the happy little Waifwood followed her mother upstairs.

"Who is the lady? you did not mention her name, Dan," he added, as the black driver, in blue and gold livery, drove off with the barouche.

"Pardon me, your Honor," replied Dan; "that's a secret, for the present at least."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Gascon, with sarcastic emphasis.

"You think perhaps, that she is a kept mistress?" said Collier, smiling.

The Judge looked an indignant disclaimer.

"So far from being a mistress," continued the slave-dealer, "she is the very opposite,"

"I understand," rejoined the Judge, in better humor: "You mean that she is virtuous and pure. Is she married?"

"Yes; that is to say, she—well, that's a mystification about it," stammered the other.

"Of course, it is nothing to me," rejoined Gascon, a little piqued, for he was not used to being thwarted; and he turned away, with an air of assumed indifference.

Collier was not disposed to let him go away in that humor. "I presume it would gratify my particular friend," said he, as a handsome close carriage came up in front of them, "if your Honor would ride with us as far as Fort Moultrie and back."

This suggestion, which the Judge would have re-

garded as audacious at any other time, was accepted with ill-concealed eagerness.

"It so happens," he said, "that I wish to speak with Major —— at the Fort, and as my own carriage is not at hand, I will accept your invitation, my good sir."

"Of course, you will not try to unravel our mystery," said the dealer.

Dan then went into the hotel and soon re-appeared conducting Lu and Waifwood. In a few minutes, the vehicle was rumbling over the pavement of King street with the whole party: all in cheerful spirits, but none so entirely happy as little Waifwood; as, leaning out at a window, she vented exclamations of wonder and delight upon the many novel objects that saluted her sight in that Broadway of the southern metropolis.

In the meantime, the venerable beau, with a woman's eye to the effect of light and shade upon a wrinkled face, had sank back into the darkest corner of the front seat, vis-a-vis with the very desirable creature with whom he was conversing on the state of the weather, the general health, &c., and now and then pointing out a public building.

"How do you like Charleston?" he inquired, after exhausting the above-named topics.

"I was never there, sir," replied Lu, innocently.

The querist imagined she had not understood his question, but did not repeat it.

New Orleans, she remarked, was not so large and bustling as she had anticipated, and she was very de-

sirous of comparing it with Cincinnati. She wished that she was there.

"Some portions of the Crescent city—especially the Faubourg St. Mary (as they call one quarter in New Orleans,) remind me," said her interlocutor, "of some sections of Paris."

The Judge was very fond of expatiating upon his experience on the Continent, and now he launched quite genially into a comparison of the relative merits of the principal European cities. Lu had read something about them, and heard much more from the dominie Perrin, and Cale Wright; consequently, Gascon talked to an appreciative listener, and he was not slow to perceive it. The result was, he that was almost as well pleased with her intelligence and good sense, as with her good looks.

Her countenance he regarded as interesting rather than beautiful, but he had had ocular demonstration that the gracefulness of her form was not, as is usually the case with southern women, indebted to adventitious aids for its charms; and it appeared to him, during the ride, that he had never met with a more attractive woman, under so modest a guise.

Probably he was the more interested, because of a certain mystery which Collier had attached to her, and he did not hesitate to express to that worthy gentleman, when the excursion was over and Lu and Waifwood had retired to their apartment, that he hoped to become much better acquainted with so charming a person.

"How long does she intend to remain in the city?" he inquired, as they stood upon the walk together,

about to part. (He was meditating another excursion without the presence of the trader.)

"She will leave to-morrow, perhaps," replied Collier.

"So soon?" exclaimed the Judge, in a sorrowful accent: "can I do nothing to induce a little delay?"

"I think you could," replied Collier. The words were unexpected, and startled the interlocutor not a little: there was, too, a significance of expression in the man's face that puzzled the wishful Gaseon. Former success in intrigues in the circles in which he had been so long a magnate, and a certain arrogance of feeling, (the fruit of unlimited power over hundreds of slaves which he owned in the interior of the state, and upon a rice plantation near the coast,) led him to hope that if he could only have time to bring the battery of his own personal attractions, and, perhaps his purse, to bear upon the heart of the object of his desire, he could take it by storm: the infatuated old fool, was so blinded by his passion! Had he asked himself if any other man could accomplish such a victory over the virtue of such a woman as this appeared to be, he would have negatived the idea instantly, but he flattered himself that he could achieve miracles. Therefore, when the words of Collier, and, still more, the air with which he uttered them, seemed to open a door to his seductive power, his old heart beat at a 2.40 gait, and he suggested that he had a royal glass of wine, and a capital cigar in his room for him, if he would go up. Of course the other "was agreeable;" and, in a few moments, behold the aristocrat and the plebeian whiffing and quaffing like equals, in the sump-

tuons apartment of the Judge! Crime is your true leveller.

"You said just now, friend Collier, that possibly I could induce the very fascinating lady with whom we have enjoyed so delightful a ride, to extend her visit here: tell me how, my good fellow; tell me how!" said the Judge.

"By purchasing her," replied Daniel, gravely regarding a curious ring of smoke which, with his head resting upon the back of his chair, he had produced by an artistical puff into the space above him. He had one eye upon his customer; however, for he was a bit of a wag, and he knew his suggestion would be a stunner.

"Purchase her?" exclaimed the old Lothario, in a cloud of doubt and wonder; "purchase her? you told me that she was as pure as Diana, sirrah!"

"I don't know how pure Diana was," rejoined Dan, coolly knocking the ashes from his cigar, "but this woman I believe to be as virtuous as any that walks: yes, or that rides."

"What do you mean, then, by intimating, to me that money can induce her to fall, now, and by my means?" inquired the Judge, who began to flatter himself, that Collier intended a compliment to his superior address.

"I mean, your Honor," replied the trader deliberately, as he re-filled his glass with wine, "that I can give you a bill of sale of her."

"A bill of sale?" gasped the Judge, so aghast with astonishment, that he was at a loss for breath to repeat the exclamation.

"Yes, but the child goes with her, of course," replied the other, and without appearing to notice his illustrious friend's emotion, though it offered him much secret gratification, he held the ruby liquor to his eye for a moment, then gulped it down. "I have sold many a mother and child in my time," he added, "but never a pair so likely as them. You will excuse me," said he, seeing the Judge rise a little impatiently from his chair, "for letting you get so mistaken about 'em, but you would have it so. Besides, it was a good chance to show you that they was something more'n common. Thinks I to myself, she'll make a tip-top nurse for the old Judge in his declining years, and (as your Honor seemed to fancy her,) I thought she might be the next thing to a wife to your Honor, you know."

"Who is she, and where in the world did you obtain her, you rascal?" inquired Gascon, stopping abruptly in his hasty walk of the room.

"I bought her and the young one for a heap of momey, (I swear it broke me, Judge!) of another trader, who gave some thousands for them to one Wright, that lives away up in Georgia, on the borders, somewhar. The papers are all straight as a duck's bill. It appears she is a daughter of old Squire Morlis by a quadroon, (or something lighter,) that he owned. He eddicated her when she grew up, and a Yankee parson in his family had the impudence to marry her secretly to a son of old Wright, who lived hard by."

"Of course there was nothing binding in that, according to our law, and I suppose the young man knew it perfectly well," remarked the Judge, taking his seat again.

Collier laughed coarsely, and said, "It was only a trick of his'n, I spose, to get round the critter. At any rate, he run off and left her as soon as she had a child by him. That was five year ago, and more, and he hasn't been heern of, sence. The only way I could get her along quietly from her old home, was to make her think she was on her way to him, and she may be a little disapp'inted when she finds out her mistake; but ef thar's a good-looking, kind-hearted, big-souled gentleman like yourself near by, to console her, I think, that, with the help of fine dresses and generous treatment for herself and the child, the two would be worth twenty thousand dollars, any man's money."

"Oh, I could fix all that!" said the Judge, stroking his little chin, complacently. "Let me see the papers."

Collier produced from his pocket-book a document, and passed it to his customer.

"This I take it is the bill of sale from the trader to you, said Gascon; "where is the one from Wright?"

Dan handed him another paper, which the Judge examined and pronounced correct.

"Now," said he, "what price do you ask for this woman and child?"

"Ten thousand dollars," was the reply.

"Did you ever receive half that for any two that you have ever had?" asked the Judge, musingly.

"I sold a girl, once, for six thousand. She was a beauty, though!" replied the slave-dealer.

"Was she as white as this woman?"

"No, sir: a dark brown, almost black, but with straight hair, and an elegant lot of it," answered

Collier : "I allow it hung nearly to the ground, and as soft as silk. I never saw so smooth and perfect a skin ; and such eyes, lips and teeth ! She was short, and a little too thick, perhaps, for your taste—"

"Sir !" said the Judge sternly, interrupting him ; and the trader begged his pardon.

"Who was the buyer ?" inquired Gascon.

"There was," replied Dan, "quite a competition in the bids (for I sold her at a vendue,) until they rose to twenty-eight hundred, when there were only two competitors left, and one of these was bidding as the agent of the girl's father, a free nigger, who had been lucky in his savings (he was a real smart feller,) and was willing to pay them all for his daughter."

"He wanted her to be free, then ?" said the Judge.

"It wasn't so much that as it was his dislike to Cobb who was bidding against him. Cobb didn't bear a good name in the county. Thar was a talk of his having killed one of his niggers, once, but it was hushed up. Any how, he got the girl."

"Poor child ! poor child !" sighed the Judge. "Between ourselves, Collier, slavery has some great evils."

"None that you can't find a match for in the North, and even in England," rejoined the slave-trader, who felt bound to say as much in justification of his calling.

"Perhaps so, perhaps so ;" responded Gascon. "But how high did the father bid ?"

"A little rising of four thousand. Then the agent and some friends round that felt sorry for the girl

(for Cobb was an old skunk, not at all like your Honor,")

"Ahem!" coughed the Judge, and moved uneasily in his chair.

"They helped him to two hundred dollars more, when what did Cobb do? He was so mad at this meddling, as he called it, that he jumped his bid right up to six thousand, slap!" And here the trader laughed, as if it were a good joke. "Of course there was no more bidding after that, and I knocked her down to him. But the woman up-stairs," said Collier, looking business-like again, and re-filling his glass, "she is quite another affair, being she's eddicated, like ourselves, and in every respect as well appearing as any lady in Charleston. And there's the child; did you ever in all your life (and you've been all over the world, Judge, and seen more and know more than any other livin' man, I reckon,) did you ever see a handsomer young one? No, sir! Thar's nary a king or emperor in England kin boast such a one."

His hearer felt compelled to acquiesce, with a smile, to what he said, but positively declined to pay more than eight thousand.

"It is dog-cheap," said Collier shaking his head gloomily, then swallowing the contents of his glass; "but give me some paper and ink, Judge, and I will make you a bill of sale. Or you fill one out and I'll sign it."

Gascon complied with the latter request, and the slave-trader with a hand habitually trembling, but now more unsteady than usual, put his name to it.

"Now come with me to a notary," said the Judge,

putting on his hat, "and I will pay you the money when you shall have acknowledged the sale under oath."

"It is seldom asked, for my property is good for it; but never mind," said Collier, and followed his customer to the street.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE BLOW FALLS.

SHE hardly knew why, but Lu was very dejected that night. Even Waifwood's childish prattle about the incidents of the ride was irksome to her, and it was with a feeling of relief that she saw the darling close her eyes in sleep, as soon as she was put to bed. Then, tired and listless, she sat down by her side and fell into a sombre reverie. Soon, the tears began to flow, which attracted the attention of her colored attendant and led her to inquire sympathizingly into the cause of her sorrow.

"It is nothing," replied Lu, wiping her eyes; "I suppose I am nervous. Don't mind me, Sarah. You had better go out and take a walk. You have not been out since I have been here."

"Oh, yes," rejoined the girl, who had been set to watch as well as wait, "I went down King street while you was away riding. I feel too tired to walk this evening."

"Then lie down on the sofa and rest yourself," said Lu.

The slave thanked her and complied. In a few minutes she, too, was asleep.

Freed from the restraint of observation, Lu arose and walked up and down the room uneasily; her whole mind and heart occupied by her husband. Until this hour, she had been comparatively patient, in anticipation of their speedy re-union, but now it seemed to her (to use her own words,) "as if she should fly," and it was about as hard for her to wait upon the tardy movements of Collier as for a bird to tarry on the earth when his air-filled pinions impel him to cleave the ethereal vault between him and the blue arch above.

She belonged to a class of nervous temperaments whose activity, generally attended with energy and vivacious cheerfulness, at times becomes morbid, and finally degenerates into a melancholy, attended with groundless presentiments of evil. Fortunately these fits of dejection, though in some instances leading to hypochondria and even insanity, are usually transient, and pass away, after a little repose and a return to agreeable social intercourse. What poor Lu needed now, more than anything else in the power of mankind to bestow, was one true, appreciative, sympathizing heart to which she could confide all her troubles, her trials, her hopes and her fears; but no such friend was at hand. And yet the poor woman did not dream of half her desolation. An indefinable anguish at heart put her upon the rack, and though she said to herself many times, "Why do I feel so? Shall I not soon see him?" her tortured mind refused to be composed.

In the meantime, Dan Collier, having finished his business with Judge Gascon and received his money in notes which he had speedily converted into gold, had treated himself to "most an excellent" bottle of wine, followed by two or three glasses of brandy: the latter in company with several boon companions, who detained him until within an hour of midnight. When he left their edifying society, the worthy trader took up his whip (for he had a buggy at the door,) and repaired, as directly as was possible for a gentleman with so much liquor aboard, to the apartment of his victim.

Now it chanced, that as Collier entered Lu's room, without even the ceremony of knocking, Judge Gascon stood at his window, looking wishfully up to hers. Seeing a man there, he was fired with jealous suspicion, and, in a rage, put on his boots and coat in order to reconnoitre, more closely, the premises in which he felt that he now had an indisputable interest.

Dan had had no expectation of finding his recent "chattel" up and dressed, and he was quite as surprised at seeing her confront him as she was at his entrance, at so late an hour, and in that condition. After a maudlin apology, and some impotent efforts to maintain a conversation, he expressed for her the most passionate love. It had come to him he said just like a rush of blood to the head; and, seeming to think that preface sufficient, he drew her towards him, as he took a seat, and would fain have placed her upon his lap. She resisted, and he became more rude. Hearing a shriek, Judge Gascon entered hastily and Collier rose to his feet, just in time to receive a cut

from his own whip over the shoulders. Between the lash and his astonishment, the rascal was almost sobered, and, without saying a word, but shrinking like a cur beneath the blows that were showered upon him, he retreated from the room to the street, where getting into his buggy, he lost no time in driving away. It had been a part of his plan to take French leave of Charleston as soon as he should have effected a sale of his victims, and he executed his intention that very night.

After a little conversation with Lu in regard to this incident, and nothing more, Judge Gascon had the good sense to retire. He would fain have lingered, it is true, but he said to himself, "It would not be so well, now. Time enough hereafter: for are not all her future days and nights my own?" So he returned her grateful good-night kindly, and went back to his room, resolved to make an example of the brutal trader on the morrow.

In the morning, however, the amiable Daniel was what the lawyers and constables who, had judgments against his property, called "non est inventus," and the initials G. T. T., were chalked in large capitals upon the door of a house which he had previously occupied. Those cabalistic letters were said by the wise men and astrologers to mean that he had gone to Texas, and, as in those days the highly favored "land of the lone star," (was it Sirius or Mercury?) was exempt from constables and bum-bailiffs, no one was so unwise as to think of pursuing him.

In the forenoon of the same day, Judge Gascon received a note from Lu, expressing her gratitude, and

requesting him to call at her room at his earliest convenience. He lost no time in complying, though not without some misgivings in regard to his own connection with her unfortunate career. If nobleness of conduct had been compatible with the indulgence of his passion, Gascon would gladly have made it the guide of his action in her case, for he was originally of a generous and sympathizing nature, but, unhappily, his lust, long indulged, had grown to such monstrous proportions, that it over-rode his better sentiments, and no consideration, either humane or prudential, could withstand it.

He found Lu in tears, while little Waifwood, leaning upon her mother's lap, looked up into her eyes, and, in her prattling way, tried to ascertain the cause of her sorrow, and console her. For a moment the visitor was not observed, and a feeling of respect, which he had rather not have entertained, made him linger upon the threshold. "Why this deference? this hesitancy?" he asked himself: "Are they not my own? Have I not purchased and paid for them? Are they not my slaves? I must get rid of this feeling, by-and-by, at any rate. For the present, I will speak only as a friend."

These thoughts had passed rapidly through his mind, when Waifwood, perceiving him, exclaimed "oh see, dear mamma, who has come to call on us!"

"Good morning, both," said the Judge, and taking a seat, as if entirely at home, placed the child upon his lap. "You are very beautiful, my little bird," and brushing back her chesnut ringlets, he kissed her rosy

cheeks. "Now will you do as much for me?" he asked.

"I rather not," she replied, and hung her head, bashfully.

"Can you tell me your name?" inquired he.

"Oh yes indeed; it is Waifwood," she answered.

"I shall call you my little Goldfinch," he rejoined, pleasantly.

"Do you think a goldfinch as pretty as an oriole?" she asked; and then began to tell him about what nice pets she used to have when she lived in the woods; but her mother checked her, lest she should say more than was prudent.

"You need not fear to be entirely candid with me, Lu;" (it was the first time that the Judge had addressed her so familiarly, but instead of offending, it was more agreeable than a formal politeness to which she had never been accustomed :) "I presume I am the only friend you have, here in South Carolina."

"In South Carolina?" exclaimed Lu in surprise.

"We are in New Orleans, are we not?"

"No, my poor girl, this is South Carolina. Now I understand why you told me, yesterday, in answer to my question as to your impressions of Charleston, that you had never seen it."

Observing the mingled wonder, fear and doubt in the expressive countenance of the unhappy slave-woman, he added "I am very sorry for you: you have been egregiously deceived, and so have I, by that rascal Collier. I had no knowledge of your true character and condition when I rode out with you, yesterday. Do not be distressed: it was no fault of yours,

and tears are unnecessary. Besides, they give me pain. Be calm. You are lovely even in your agitation, poor girl, but I shall feel very much obliged to you if you will control your emotion. It makes me nervous, and cannot possibly do you any good. I am your truest friend: you shall want for nothing. But answer me two or three questions candidly. You were once the property of a Mr. Morlis, were you not?"

"He was my father, sir," replied Lu, proudly, for she was a little hurt by the manner of her examiner.

"And your owner," added Gascon. "He sold you to a Mr. Wright, did he not? Answer freely, as to an old friend," said the Judge, kindly: "no one has the almost paternal interest in you that I have."

Lu wept bitterly at the recollection that her own father had sold her like a package of merchandise.

"I don't like you!" said Waifwood, leaving the knee of her owner; "you have made mamma cry:" and getting into her mother's lap, she tried to console her.

Judge Gascon rose nervously, and strode across the room to a window. Recovering his equanimity, in a few moments he approached Lu again, and, leaning upon a centre-table, gazed upon her wishfully. His impulse was to hug her to his heart, and kiss away every tear from those deep, sad eyes which now haunted his existence; but her emotion was sacred even from his intrusion, and an invisible hand held him back.

"Mr. Morlis," said Lu, at length, "did sell me, his own flesh and blood, to the elder Wright. He did it upon his death-bed, and, with that monstrous sin upon

his soul, went straight into the presence of his Maker. "Oh, God forgive him! I cannot."

Her head fell upon her heaving breast, when she had uttered these words, but her eyes, fixed almost despairingly upon her child, had no more tears to shed.

The old libertine would fain have said something, but he had as little courage to do so, as the beer-boy in the presence of Mrs. Siddons. His passion was "of the earth, earthy;" hers, of a sublimer sort; and he was dumb in its over-awing presence.

Presently, she pushed the child from her, almost rudely, and rising, with her hands upon her forehead, as if she feared her wits would run away if she did not hold on to them, she paced the chamber wildly, to and fro, for a few moments, then tore down a cloud of hair upon her shoulders and gabbled to herself strange words, that made the man a coward. Yes, coolly as he could have met an enemy intent upon his life, or faced a foe in that cold-blooded and utterly damnable sort of assassination, called a duel, Judge Gascon, the high blooded and chivalric, was cowed by the passion of a woman, and that woman his slave!

Women may tremble at times, and often shed tears, but there are occasions when it seems as if neither man nor God himself (we say it in all homage,) could make her humble and prostrate.

Lu felt that her wrongs were unspeakable, but with flashing eyes and grating teeth, and hands so clenched that the nails pierced her tender skin, she paused in her walk of the room, and confronting the trembling Judge, told him her story, in her own impassioned

way, and denounced the vengeance of Almighty God, upon the system by which her own life was a desolation and a curse, and the happiness of millions of his creatures only a mockery and shame. Then exhausted with her own violence, she sank down by the side of the bed, and buried her face in the clothing.

Her appalled listener, though half petrified by her frenzy, stole a peep at her heaving bosom, (which seemed as if it would burst its boundaries,) but speech was denied him, for his tongue, usually smooth and glib enough, refused to wag.

While waiting for the storm in the mother's breast to subside, he strove to interest the child, but Waifwood who had been pale as death during the scene which we have attempted to describe, now stood at her side, confronting him almost defiantly; her face flushed and angry, and her little hands clenched as if to strike him, if he approached. She had evidently received the impression that he was the chief cause of her parent's indignation and grief.

In this unpleasant situation, Judge Gascon deemed it most politic to withdraw, and he did so with the more equanimity (indeed, he smiled at the child's earnestness,) because feeling how entirely in his power these poor creatures were. Pausing at the threshold, as he was retiring, he said, in the tone of kindness which so well became him, "I came, Lu, at your own request, and with the most friendly feeling, but you drive me away in anger.—"

"Oh, no, no!" cried the unfortunate woman, leaving the bedside and prostrating herself at his feet, as she took his hand; "pardon me, my friend, my bone-

factor! I would not blame you: do not think it. But what is to become of me? How shall I find my husband? My husband! they have deceived me in all the rest, why not as to him, also? It must be so!" and she arose with a look of despair: "they have not seen him—they have not seen him—they do not know where he is! If he still live, he may be married to another, or at least be entirely indifferent to my unhappy fate!"

Again she paced the room in a distracted manner, her long hair, hanging like a dark cloud about her neck and shoulders—a symbol of the gloom upon her heart.

"Do not give way to these feelings my dear girl," was all that Gascon could say. Impotent words! Surely, silence were better!

"Oh, it was a cruel fraud!" cried Lu, in a tone of pathos that pierced to the old man's heart. "It was cruel, bitter cruel!" she repeated, and sobbing violently hugged to her breast poor little Waifwood, who with eyes full of tears was ruefully regarding her.

"Dear mamma, do not cry any more!" pleaded the child. "Why do you take on so?"

"Alas! my precious one," replied Lu, gazing upon her cherub face with melancholy fondness, "you are fatherless!"

"Oh no, dear mamma! Is not God my father, and yours, too? He will take care of us; I am sure he will. There, mamma, let me kiss away your tears!"

"You shall go with me to my home," Gascon at length found words to say. "It shall always be your home, if you will."

"Oh no, no, no!" cried Lu, gratefully "I will not be a burden to you, sir."

"On the contrary, my dear girl," he rejoined, "it will be a pleasure. You can be of service to me in a thousand ways, and live like a lady, too. Even the little beauty in your arms will help me pass away many a tedious hour, and when I am old, she shall smooth my bed when I am weary, and lend me her arm when I take my walk. Oh," he added gaily, "I presume we shall make a very happy household!" And the Judge believed what he said.

Looking encouraged and grateful, Lu thanked him, and said that for her child's sake, she would accept the home he offered, until she could make other arrangements.

"Good! We will start for my plantation, immediately. The bills for your new clothing, which that rascal Collier has left unpaid—"

"Is it possible?" interrupted Lu, looking rather blank, and coloring with mortification.

"Oh, never mind about it! give yourself no uneasiness," said Gascon, a little ostentatiously. "Fortunately, I have an abundance of cash, as well as real estate, and I will pay the bills with pleasure. No thanks, I beg of you. I now regard your happiness as my own peculiar care. You may want to disburse a little money to the servants, and for other purposes: here is my purse. Use it as you please."

Full of grateful sensibility, Lu again thanked him, but declined upon the ground that she had no use for money.

"Here, Goldfinch!" said the Judge to the child,

who, with a smiling face, was timidly approaching him, (for she, too, felt thankful,) "Give this purse to your mother. You were going to fight me a little while ago, ha! ha! ha!" (and he laughed good-humoredly, while the shamed Waifwood hung her head,) "but don't feel badly about it: we shall be the best of friends, by-and-by, I have no doubt."

Our little protege, however, also excused herself from taking the money, and, facetiously calling them a couple of obstinates, Judge Gascon bade them good bye for a little while, and went away.

CHAPTER XLII.

ON THE CONTINENT.

LET us now ascertain what had really become of the missing husband of Lu. Our limits will not admit a relation of all his adventures since he left so abruptly the paternal abode. Indeed, we must pass them by, as briefly as possible. We will only refer to their result, and proceed to others nearer home.

Proud-spirited (as all but the poorer class of Southerners are,) Cale shunned, in the North, any association with those who would have cheerfully aided (and the more promptly because he was from south of Mason and Dixon's line,) his endeavors to become an artist; and for a few months, he dragged out a life of the direst poverty. An attic room in New York, furnished and cared for, at a dollar a week, was his home, and a sixpenny loaf, divided between the morning and evening meals, was, for a long time, his sole subsistence. Both his residence and his manner of living being a secret, no one of the thousands that daily thronged the multitudinous wilderness could have so much as dreamed that, that genteel, fine-looking young fellow, with the pensive yet haughty air, as

he walked along Broadway, was in point of fact, (animately considered,) less comfortably fed than any slave upon his parents' plantation. Yet physical want was the least of the sufferings which he so carefully concealed from observation. The beggar to whom he was compelled to deny the coveted shilling, and give an ill-afforded copper in its stead, would turn away either in silent disappointment, or grumbling remonstrance, and poor Cale, cut to the quick, would experience a foolish mortification and sense of poverty hard to describe and still worse to endure. And then, to say nothing of the intellectual wants suggested by booksellers' windows and library advertisements, and the numerous exhibitions of the Fine Arts, none of which he could gratify, it was despicably hard to have to look closely after his washerwoman's bills, and to suggest to his landlady, from time to time, that her accommodations were falling below the standard agreed upon, &c.

His chagrin, under these petty vexations, produced in him a reticence of manner not at all conducive to the making of new friends and acquaintances, and the advancement of his pecuniary interests. He had a taste for architecture, and the walls of his garret became covered with designs for country villas, churches and public buildings, which he drew for his own amusement. They had merit in them, and with study and more practise and (quite as indispensable,) a tact for propelling himself into notice, his plans would have found their way into bricks and marble; but this good fortune was not for his carving.

Somebody found out, however, that he was a

clever draughtsman, and gave him now and then an order, from the compensation for which he was enabled to save enough to pay his passage to Europe, whither he went not with the mere desire to see and study the notable places and the works of art of which he had heard so much, but with the rather desperate idea that if it was ordained that he should starve, that consummation had better happen to him as far away from home as possible, that none who had known here should suffer a single regret at his fate or drop a hypocritical tear over his grave. In short, like many young adventurers upon the sea of life, he inwardly repined at the rebuffs he received from unfeeling fortune, and fell into a misanthropic way; a disease, compared to which, the measles is quite a sensible ailment.

He labored under the impression that his child was dead, and his wife a lunatic, in better care than he could give her; hence, he had no tie, he thought, to retain him in America. A good fit of sea-sickness is a great revolutionizer, and it acted like a charm upon the stomach and brains of Cale Wright. The passage was a long one, and the young man, had ample time for reflection, resulting in sundry resolutions as salutary as the breezes which now began to renovate his physical system. Most prominent among these was a determination to work, and to get something more than a living, though it should take twenty hours a day to accomplish it.

Arrived in London, he was so fortunate as to find a publisher who was in want of a sketcher of American scenery. He served this man in various ways for

nearly a year, and was then enabled to proceed to Florence and Rome. There he feasted his love of the Fine Arts for several weeks, and made the acquaintance of some American painters, who only knew him, however, as a connoisseur from New York. As he never alluded to his Southern origin, it was naturally inferred that he was a Northern man; and on more than one occasion at the meetings in the artists' studios, Cale found himself battling against the peculiar institution of his country, with one or more defenders of it from the free States. In general, nearly all his hearers agreed with him, for slavery in a republic is regarded every where but in our boasted "land of liberty" as the most preposterous of paradoxes, yet the projectors of the new Southern Confederacy have the hardihood to assert that a democracy cannot be perpetuated upon any other basis than slave labor!

From Florence, Cale went to Rome, to examine its graceful antiquities, and study its magnificent architecture, and to paint it, if he could. He imagined, that he could execute something creditable, for an amateur, but before he had labored long, he threw down the brush in despair. A priest saw the discarded canvass in Cale's room one day, with its face to the wall; and brought it to the light. There was a huge big daub of black paint in the middle of it—the result of a petulant blow, in which its owner had embodied his emphatic condemnation of its claim to live. Whether it was that the dingy blotch relieved the faulty portions of the embryo picture, or that the visiter was inclined to flatter, I cannot say, but certain it is that he protested that it was a shame to spoil the

best Gothic door that he had seen for a twelvemonth; and expressed a wish that Cale would restore and finish it.

Re-assured by this unexpected praise from a man of reputed learning and taste, our friend took another look at the painting, and fancied he saw in it beauties of fore-shortening, and shading, not apparent to him before: so he went to work to retrieve and perfect it. The priest—a Jesuit—called when it was done, and expressed entire satisfaction with his work. This led to an intimacy, equivalent to friendship. Father Alfonso had been a great student, but of all his acquirements, there was nothing that he seemed to enjoy so well as his thorough knowledge of the details of Gothic architecture. He saw in that system almost a conjugal union of grace and beauty with grandeur and sublimity; symbolical of the excellences of the religion of which he was an ardent though unostentatious disciple; and he could dilate upon it with the enthusiasm of a poet. Cale's mind was well inclined and trained to take fire from the sparks scintillated by the fancy of his new friend, and he studied earnestly to fix upon canvass what the other painted so glowingly in words. He achieved a success; at least the Jesuit, and his friends, praised the work unsparingly. From his sublimations of Gothic architecture, it was but a step, for the priest, to the glories of the ancient faith, of which the grandest structure in Rome was only a monument; and, adroitly enough, he managed to excite in the skeptical Southerner an interest in the Roman Catholic religion. In short, young Wright became a convert. The antiquity, and vast learning and influence of the

Jesuits, were the themes which Father Alfonso next ventured to recommend to the attention of his protege, and skilfully illustrating his topic by quotations from history and the traditions of the church, he infused into the mind which he was now moulding at will, a profound admiration for the intellectual power and achievements of the followers of Ignatius Loyola, and his pupil conceived an irrepressible desire to become one of them. This he could accomplish only by joining the priesthood, and Father Alfonso (rejoicing inwardly in the fruit of his labors,) readily consented to prepare him for the important step.

If any critical reader should regard so great a summersault as this, from the extreme of skepticism to the bosom of "Holy Mother Church," as too improbable, even for a novel, I can only remind him that it is a poor rule that wont work both ways; and it is well known that nothing is more common than defections from that moss-covered institution to the ranks of the anti-christians. German infidelity, itself, is a fungus from its decaying trunk.

The celibacy inseparable from the priesthood would have rendered it impossible for Cale to acknowledge his wife as such, if she should be, by any means, under providence, restored to his arms; but that was an event which he believed he had not the slightest reason to anticipate. Indeed it was this conviction, and a settled sorrow at heart caused by his loss of Lu, that reconciled him, he thought, to a monastic separation from the world.

Thus, while poor Lu, deceived by the misrepresentations of the pseudo friend of her husband, was fondly

expecting their blissful re-union, he was steadily advancing to that consummation which would make an impassable gulf between them.

At this critical juncture, there was an interposition,—shall we call it providential? As the the French say, nous verrons:—"We shall see."

One day, the lodgings opposite to Cale's, previously occupied by an intensely ugly package of skin and bones (a devout spinster who had come upon a pilgrimage to Rome and given it the finishing touch by going up and down the famous stairs upon her knees,) rejoiced in the advent of a tenant of an entirely different pattern—an Italian countess; poor, perhaps, but proud, and as irresistible a creature as ever added by her loveliness to the gorgeous beauty of the seven-hilled city. She was the paragon of the Italian Venuses, and so devout! Our friend could have sworn she was as immaculate as she was incomparable. He knew it, for one morning, unseen by her, he knelt at the same shrine in the cathedral, and unintentionally overheard her utter orisons that were fragrant with piety. Besides, Father Alfonso whom the fascinating Florentine (for such she was,) had adopted for her confessor since her arrival in Rome, spoke of her as a model of Christian virtue.

The Countess was not slow in reciprocating the handsome American's good opinion. In short, she conceived a passion for him, and the two having been introduced to each other by the managing priest, (who had enlisted her persuasive powers, in aid of his own, to keep Cale true to his holy project,) she had ample opportunity to make large drafts upon his admiration,

all of which he honored at first sight. Soon, a protest came. "He was going too far," she said. "She feared," (and here the long silken lashes drooped and she sighed,) "he thought more of her than the holy orders which he had promised to assume. He must pause in time. It was her sacred duty to bid him to beware of a fault of which she confessed herself not entirely free." She blushed like her own sunset sky, and hung her head, as she made an admission so intoxicating to the excitable Georgian. Still, he struggled with the Circe, and in the solitude of his chamber turned for aid to the Holy Mother. As he rose from his knees, and went involuntarily to the window, he saw the beautiful Countess at hers, and in tears. His vanity whispering that they were for him, his good resolve stepped out, and passion entered into full possession of the premises.

Father Altonso, little dreaming that his instrument, the fair Florentine, was over-reaching him, had left Rome for a few days: precious time, which she made the most of.

She did not say so in so many words, but in many artful ways, let the American know that she loved him, yet preferred to suffer in silence (woman's most desperate condition of sorrow,) rather than avow a passion at war with her sense of duty.

We have said, that the young man's vanity was flattered by the impression which he had involuntarily made upon this fine woman: we ought to have added that his benevolent sympathy, also, was upon her side. He could not bear to see that magnificent creature

suffering for his sake. Was it not natural, then, that he should seek to console her?

The nuptial tie is not fashionably regarded as indispensable in such cases, in some cities upon the Continent, but Cale was what the Southerners call "the very soul of honor," and he would have revolted at the idea of driving any undue advantage from his conquest. He observed that the Countess no longer indulged as formerly in commendations of his project of joining the priesthood: on the contrary, an interview rarely passed without either open strictures or disparaging insinuations from her ruby lips against the "holy orders."

On one of these occasions, Father Alfonso (who had returned to Rome sooner than was expected,) glided into the Countess's apartment as noiselessly as a shadow, and, in a few moments, as silently withdrew. Had the lovers seen him, they could not have failed to notice the consternation which even his well-trained visage could not conceal.

"Traitor!" he muttered between his teeth, as he descended the stairway.

He had heard enough to know that she had taken advantage of his absence to undo his almost executed scheme of making his American proselyte a priest, and he shrewdly inferred, that her motive was the appropriation of his vacillating pupil to herself. Undoubtedly, he vowed to be revenged upon her. Certain it is, that he took our friend to the opera-house the next evening, and, when the second act was on, maliciously pointed out to him a rather indifferent singer as being no other than their friend the Countess.

There were many performers on, at the time, and Cale had not observed her.

"Gracious heavens!" exclaimed our countryman, in an undertone, to the wily Italian, "why is the Countess there? This must be some freak of hers!"

"Oh, no;" replied the priest, smiling blandly, for for he was enjoying a triumph now: "she is a member of the company."

"You don't say so!" iterated Cale with manifest astonishment and chagrin, for it pitched his goddess from her pedestal at a single blow: "I have never seen her here, before!"

"Because you come rarely, and as her services are not always required, (for she is not a favorite,) you have not happened to be present when she has been," was the reply.

"But she never said a word to me upon the subject!" rejoined Cale.

"Why should she?" the Jesuit asked, and slyly rolled his tongue in his cheek.

Wright colored, and stammered out something about its being natural.

"It is not always considered in good taste to speak of one's occupation," was the response, "and until the Countess attains the top of her profession, she will not be likely to air it much in the presence of strangers. Come along with me: I will take you behind the scenes; for I am confessor to the empresario, himself, and have the pass."

"Excuse me!" replied our friend, instinctively shrinking from letting his inamorata know that he had discovered a fact of which she desired he should be kept ignorant.

"If you have never been upon the stage," said the priest, "you will meet there with much that will be novel to you."

Upon this plea, Cale's scruples were satisfied, and he accompanied Father Alfonso without farther objection; resolving, however, to avoid a recognition by the Countess, if possible.

Taking a position "at the R. H. U. E.", under the shadow of one of the "wings," where they were concealed by the blue and black dominoes which they had assumed, appropriate to the masked ball which made the scene, they had a good view of all the characters of the stage.

"Yonder," said Cale, "is the Countess: I know her by her majestic figure."

"Who is he that walks with her?" inquired the Jesuit, innocently.

"I have no idea," was the response; "the black mask he wears completely conceals his face."

"Perhaps it is her patron, the Duke," suggested the priest.

There was an asp under the words, and Cale was stung to the quick. He uttered an angry exclamation, involuntarily, then turned away in disgust. The peculiar smell of the stage was, he fancied almost stifling, and remarking that the atmosphere of the place seemed reeking with moral pollution, he suggested, to the priest that they should withdraw.

Without appearing to be in the least inimical to the Countess, Father Alfonso had now succeeded, he thought, in destroying her influence over his pupil, so he made no effort to detain him longer, but bade him,

smilingly, good night, saying that he would himself remain to suggest to the empressario some desirable reforms for religion's sake.

When Wright parted from him, he did not observe a pair of dark eyes watching him as he carelessly removed his mask, and turned from the motley scene upon the stage.

"Betrayed!" she muttered to herself. "This is that accursed Jesuit's work; but I will be revenged."

Making a stride forward as she spoke, her impulse was to follow the object of her love, but he was retiring hastily, and she changed her mind.

As this brace of foreigners have nothing more to do with our story, we will leave them, very much as we would two quarrelsome vipers in a cage to sting and poison each other *ad libitum*, after their own fashion.

Cale, of course, easily recovered from the impression made upon him by the fascination of the serpent-woman. He was constituted with a capacity for reciprocating affection sincerely manifested by a loveable creature, but with the first evidence of any diminution of the sentiment in the object, his passion would suddenly cool, and his offended *amour propre* assert its power again. He had met with but one heart, that he could swear was true, and she was truth itself. She was the pure gold, the virgin ore; uncontaminated, unalloyed, priceless. Why had he not treasured her? why had he not defied the scornful world, and listened to her entreaties for acknowledgment, while their marriage was yet new, and Lu was in her right mind? Such were the reflections that came to him again and again, as he lay prostrated by an intermittent fever contracted near the Pontine Marshes. What

a devoted nurse she would be to him then, had he preserved her, as he might have done, from those long, dreary days of neglect and nights of exposure in the wilderness of the Cherokee, while the child of their ill-starred love was struggling within her for deliverance. The thunder-bolt which had stricken her down, and left her in helpless idiocy, had been more merciful than he ; for his love had only served to render her condition of slavery utterly intolerable, and her heart entirely wretched, but the heaven-sent shaft, in destroying her mind had brought with it total forgetfulness of the past and a happy unconsciousness of present sorrow. Six years had passed since then, six years of loneliness, broken only by the transient passion with which he had been inspired by the beautiful Italian, and of which he was now heartily ashamed. "Poor Lu !" he sighed, "I suppose, that like her child, she sleeps at length the sleep that knows no waking. In this land we might have lived happily ; her education and talents would have made her respected. As it is, my wife is my art—henceforth, I am devoted to it alone." And it was even so. With recovered health, Cale repaired to Rome, and gave all his attention to painting.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE RICE PLANTATION.

JUDGE GASCON had had a very difficult role to play. He had got more than he had bargained for. He had caught a Tartar. The spider is seldom hampered by his own net, but the eminent and venerable son of South Carolina—the jurist, scholar and rake—was: he had paid the almost fabulous price of eight thousand dollars for a slave, only to make her his mistress; and she had become such, not in the sense of the term that he had anticipated, but in that higher and sterner sort which confers power without compromising honor. In short, the old aristocrat was helplessly, ay, hopelessly, infatuated by his insane passion for Lu, and there was not a scarred back upon his plantations more galled than was the proud master's heart, at times, by the frowns of the poor bond-woman, a bill of sale of whom he carried in his pocket.

How many times he had looked at that evidence of his purchase, and iterated to himself, "She is mine!" But the time had come for him to doubt it, and one day when she had scornfully repelled his advances and

defied his power, and he feared to do anything with her, lest she should hate him utterly, he flung the bill of sale upon the ground, when she had gone, and stamped upon it as a vile and worthless thing.

"Accursed paper," he muttered, "you are an arrant liar. You seem to make that woman mine, but, by heaven, I am the slave, not she!"

It was true. In making over to him her body, the instrument made no conveyance of her spirit. That it was not in the bond was a rather important omission, as she had a good deal of it, and its control over her person was paramount to the paper evidence of proprietorship, or even to the power of the sheriff and his posse: for could she not die in spite of them? Other means being lacking, she could starve herself to death. She had said as much, and her "master" had begged her to be reasonable, which was equivalent to showing the white feather. In fine, he allowed her to have her own way, and to rule supreme over his household; happy if she but smiled upon him as she presided at the coffee-urn, or rewarded him with a pleasant word of acknowledgement when he did a good thing for her child, or, at her request, for any other deserving creature upon his plantation.

This household of which Lu was made the mistress contained no acknowledged relative of its lord and master. There were, it is true, a number of young domestics born and reared upon the place, who claimed exemption from the insalubrious labors of the rice fields upon the pretence, that, owing to more or less "white" blood in their veins, they were physically unfitted to do work that only the unmixed breed could

perform, and survive a single summer; but if we were to attribute the parentage of all the hybrid "humans," born upon a plantation, to the owner, we should represent him as "worse than a Turk." Some allowance must be made for the license used by his sons and neighbors, and even for what he may regard as the largest measure of hospitality to "the stranger within his gates."

There were, too, an unusual number of good-looking yellow girls, acquired from time to time, by purchase. Of course, among so many, the work was light, but the less they had to do, the less they were willing to; choosing rather to idle away most of the time in arraying themselves in gewgaws, or in quarrelling, in a small way, with each other. The insolence of these persons was remarkable, considering that they were merely slaves, but familiarity often breeds contempt, and if they were offensively careless in their deportment even in the presence of their master, he had only himself to blame for it. For all the licentiousness upon his plantations, he alone was answerable, and when, now and then, he found among the friends whom he visited a well-ordered, virtuously-conducted household, and wondered that such discipline could exist without any show of force, he could easily have satisfied himself, that the conduct of the slaves is regulated, in a great measure, by the example of those in authority over them. Upon his rice and cotton plantations he employed nearly a thousand hands: to a considerable extent, their moral training was in his charge; but what had he done for their spiritual well-being; their welfare beyond this life? actually noth-

ing. On the contrary, how many of his "favorite" slaves will testify against him at the last day! Their wrongs were greater even than those, of the poor creatures who died, prematurely, from excess of work in the cotton-picking season, or by the deadly malaria and damps of the rice-fields.

It may be easily imagined that Lu's position over such a household as I have described was anything but agreeable. No one had told the domestics that she was a slave like themselves, but they seemed to have inferred so, instinctively, and regarded her with jealous and defiant eyes. She could be brave, generous, self-sacrificing, but not politic, and she made no effort, either to command or conciliate. In the household, without being unkind, she was uncongenial, and it was only with the sick and decrepid, in the huts, that her good qualities were at all appreciated. Amongst this needy class, Lu moved like a ministering angel, and she became one in their grateful regard. The rudest and most stupid slaves live upon the rice plantation, (if that can be called living, which full of privations and exposure, results in premature decay and death,) but they are not insensible to sympathy.

In her visits to the diseased and superannuated, Lu was accompanied by little Waifwood, who took pleasure in reading to them from the Bible, which some of them were glad enough to hear. Then, too, she would often run to them with little nourishing messes, or medicaments, prepared for them by her mother. It required some self-denial on her part, at times, to pay them these attentions, for she was very much in-

terested in coloring engravings; an occupation in which she manifested so much precocious talent, that Judge Gascon awarded her much praise, and helped her, all he could, to attain proficiency. She had become a favorite with him, both on this account and for the kind offices which she performed for his negroes, and he took pride in owning her. One day when looking over her shoulder, as she sat in the big chair with paper and pencil in hand, he discovered a design which he thought original and full of humor, and he declared, with a smile of pleasure, that his little Goldfinch was made for an artist, and, if money could hire a good teacher, she should have one.

"Where in the world could the little witch have obtained an idea of a scene so droll as this?" he asked, as he held the drawing for Lu's inspection. Lu looked up from the shirt which she was making for him, and glanced inquiringly at her child.

"I saw one just like it, once, when I lived with mammy Dinah," exclaimed Waifwood. "Our dear, good Major drew it. That's him, there, with the paper and the pencil; and that, oh that's," (and she burst into a little laugh,) "that's our old Growler up in the chair! He was a bear, don't you think! And he loved me dearly; only sometimes he would push me over, which was real naughty in him. This fat woman is mammy, and this is me. (I was little then, you know.) That there is Burrow, my woodchuck; and here's my rabbit. Oh, he was a darling! It's all as the Major drew it for me. Dear me, how I would like to see them all! I wonder if they don't miss me? Oh, I know they must."

She had rattled on thus far, almost without taking breath. As soon as she paused, the Judge, whose curiosity was excited, began to question her, and in her artless way, she gave him, scrap by scrap, all that she knew of her life in the forest.

Gascon was interested and thoughtful. That this lovely and gifted child, born in the wild franchise of the woods, free and happy as the birds, should be a slave, became from that moment an anomalous and repulsive idea to him. For the mother's condition of bondage he had little, if any, sympathy; for was she not born and grown in it? The heart, that would be pained at the trapping and imprisonment of a robin, feels no regret at the caging of a canary. So the Judge determined that there should be good things in store for his Goldfinch, as he called her, and he foreshadowed them in this wise.—

“Lu, had Cale Wright any taste for drawing?”

Receiving an affirmative reply, he continued, “That accounts for the talent displayed by Goldfinch. It must be cultivated. I will see that it is. She shall enjoy every advantage. The weather is becoming warm, and we have remained quite long enough among these insalubrious rice swamps. To-morrow, I shall leave for my cotton plantation near Abbeville. It is near Georgia, and quite as healthy. I had no intention of having you remain here: you shall go with me, both of you.”

“But what will poor old aunty do, without me?” asked Lu in a deprecating tone.

“As she did before you came,” replied the Judge, coldly; the person alluded to, being a superannuated

negress, long ago worn out in his service, and now likely to die very soon.

"I could not leave her as she is," rejoined Lu: "and she takes so much comfort in Waifwood's reading! Then, too, there is Cannic John, as they call him—"

"Mechanic John, they mean," said Gascon, interrupting her; "what of him? He has more mechanical skill than any nigger upon the plantation: and whether it is the building a boat, or repairing a watch, or anything between the two, I would as soon have him to do it as any white artisan at the North. Is he sick?"

"Yes," replied Lu, "they say he has not been himself since you sold his wife to the New Orleans merchant."

"What a fool!" exclaimed Gascon, impatiently. Then after musing a few moments added, "Confound the fellow, I had no idea he would take it so to heart: I will buy Jenny back again, if that will restore him. What do you say, Lu?"

"I doubt if it will make him any better," replied Lu. "She can never be to him what she was. Waif, you may go and show your picture to John."

The child gladly obeyed the mandate, which the mother had given in order to get her out of the way of a conversation not adapted to her ears.

When the little one had run out, Lu told Gascon that it was notorious upon the plantation that the New Orleans gentleman had purchased Jenny for her good looks.

"They are mistaken," rejoined the Judge. "Marr was my guest. I made a political wager with him, and

the stakes were one nigger against another. We happened to be taking a look at a rice-field where Jenny was at work, and it was by the merest accident that Marr pointed to her as the slave he would choose if he should win. I lost and he has the girl, and a very easy time she will have of it. I sent a substitute to John's cabin—a younger and more likely girl: what fault has John to find with her?"

"She has a lover of her own," "and cares so little about John that she is not fit even for a mere companion." As a nurse she is worthless, for she cannot make so much as a bowl of gruel."

The Judge smiled, and was "sorry,"—provoking Lu to an indignant protest against the cruel indifference which he had manifested in the welfare of four human beings whose happiness he had staked upon an idle wager.

He retorted sarcastically, that she, herself, certainly had a claim to a fellow-feeling with such creatures.

"You have the audacity," he added, "to accuse me of cruelty to my negroes! Are they not well-fed, and if any of them go half naked, is it not their own fault? Do I work them beyond their strength, or is the lash used half as much upon my plantation as on my neighbors?"

"Yes, you do work them beyond their endurance, or rather your overseer does," retorted Lu, vehemently: "they come of a stock unaccustomed to toil, for in the land of their forefathers the rich soil yields its fruits almost spontaneously: therefore, this incessant work in swampy fields that are covered with water

half the time, is unnatural, and it discourages and wears them out. You are liberal in supplies of clothing, which in this climate is a burden to them : and there is no lack of food, and, at night, good housing.—”

“I give them holidays, too,” said the Judge, interrupting her ; “and when too old to earn so much as the salt of their porridge, I make them pensioners upon my bounty. What would you have me do more ?”

“I would have all you slave-holders treat your slaves as if they were human beings, or at least half-human !” exclaimed Lu, almost fiercely.

“We do !” replied Gascon, laughing ; (and alluding in irony to the political status of the slaves,) Constitutionally, they are three-fifths human.”

“They are, then, only two-fifths cattle !” retorted Lu in the same tone. “You admit, by implication, at least, that they have a little over half as much love and sensibility as yourselves, yet treat them as if they had no more intellectual desires, and social and domestic ties, than your horses ! The affections, which, among the whites, you regard as too pure and holy to be tampered with, are nothing in your esteem when they animate the bosom, and sweeten the toil, of a slave ! I tell you, Judge Gascon,” she added, in a denunciatory manner, as she arose from her chair, “it is all wrong, it is all accursed ; and you will find your sophistry, in defence of it, as rotten as cobwebs when you shall offer it in extenuation at the bar of Judgment !”

The warm blood glowed through the nut-brown

complexion of Lu, and her black eyes flashed in their dark hollows, as she spoke.

"By Jupiter Ammon!" cried the Judge, "Though you know too much for a slave, and speak too boldly for one in your position, your enthusiasm becomes you, my beautiful sibyl!" and before she could avoid his open arms, he clasped her in his embrace impulsively and strove to kiss her.

Indignation and rage will make even a weak woman strong. It was so with Lu. Pushing Gascon from her, she smote fiercely, with her clenched hand, the lips that would fain have taken her own by storm, and commanded him to stand back. He was not so lost to manhood as to return a woman's blow: indeed, to do him justice he thought her rashness excusable, though in very bad taste and decidedly injudicious; besides damaging to false teeth.

He had seized the wrist of the offending hand, however, when a loud outcry of shrill female voices in front of the house caused him to drop it and go quickly to the window and open the lattice, to discover the cause of the alarm. The mulatto girls were screaming at the top of their lungs, in helpless fright, and pointing towards the river, which could be plainly seen from the piazza.

CHAPTER XLIV.

A CHILD-HEROINE.

A DREAD of some accident to her child, impelled Lu to rush forth, and, hurrying over the shell-paved walk, and under the fragrant orange trees, to run directly to the muddy stream, which (pleasant enough for alligators and snapping turtles, but offering anything but a pleasant bath for children,) she had often cautioned Waifwood, was no fit resort for her.

Nor would the little one have gone thither; but on her way to the cabin of "Cannic John," she saw a child of his playing so near the edge of the small pier to which her father's boat was tied, that she was impelled to run to her and remove her out of danger. She was too late, however: the young one fell in before she could get to her. Two yellow girls arrived at the place in time to see Waifwood leap into the water. With a cry of terror, instead of running to her assistance, they fled to the house and gave the alarm.

The brave Waifwood had not stopped to ask her-

self how she should get out of the river; she only saw the little darkey rise to the surface, with a piteous face, and hands extended to her for help: so she yielded to a natural impulse, and jumped in.

She had often frolicked in the Nantahala, a swifter stream than this, which was thick and sluggish, and she was not frightened, until the little one, clinging about her neck, drew her under. Then, as she rose again to the surface, and saw the bright sky above her instead of the turbid waters, she ejaculated "God help me to save Zady!" and took courage.

When Lu, followed by the two girls and their master, in the distance, came to the end of the pier, pale as death and almost breathless, she found our little heroine clinging with one hand to the boat which was tied there, while, with the other arm she clasped the crying child. In a minute more, Lu had them both upon the shore, safe and sound, and not much the worse for their ducking. Of the two, Waifwood had experienced the most disadvantage, her nice clothes having suffered some; which was not the case with little black Zady's, as all she had in the wide world were at home in her sick father's humble cabin; her new mother not caring enough about her to dress her up in them, except on holiday occasions.

Consigning John's child to the care of the girls, Judge Gascon bore off Waifwood in triumph; heaping praises upon her conduct, and promising her not only a far prettier dress than she had spoilt, but many valuable advantages, the nature of which he vaguely hinted at, but declined, at present, to disclose.

Nothing could have happened better calculated

than this incident to avert for the present, at least, "a permanent rupture of peaceable relations" between Lu and her nominal master. Kindness to herself weighed little with her, but to praise, and be kind to her child, was the way to her heart. She was conscious, that the Judge thought a great deal of Waifwood, and it reconciled her to remain for the present under his charge. Nevertheless, she had no intention of accompanying him on his journey to his cotton plantation, nor would she consent to her daughter's going. She was not unmindful of the danger of their destruction by the malaria of the rice-swamps during the summer which was close at hand, but she mentally argued that as life had for her only pains and penalties, (and the wounding of the spirit which is far more difficult to endure than mere bodily torture,) it was not worth her while to take any trouble to preserve it: nor could she lose it in a better cause than in alleviating the sufferings and ministering to the comfort of the sick and the superannuated, upon the plantation, to whom her care seemed indispensable.

Stern, as it may appear to the reader, Lu had a certain dread of her daughter's out-living her. If she had ever possessed any hopefulness, it had gradually been crushed out; and she could foresee nothing bright or cheering in the future of Waifwood. It was possible, that, through the patronage of Judge Gascon, her nominal owner, the childhood of her darling might be rendered comfortable and even happy; but what was likely to be her fate when her beauty, already regarded as extraordinary, should mature into youthful womanhood?

The anxious heart of the poor mother was tortured by the reply which thrilled like a wail across its aching chords, and there came to her pale lips the bitter words, "It were well that she should die young." So she resolved that Waifwood should not accompany her master if by any means, however, desperate, she could prevent it. Possibly she may have thought, too, that the proximity of the rice plantation to the sea was more favorable to their escape than a home in the interior would be. It is likely she may have known that slaves sometimes effected their transit to a free port by secreting themselves on board of the vessels of the Northern coasters. At all events, she turned a deaf ear both to the command and the entreaty of Gascon. Believing her attention indispensable to the recovery of his most valuable mechanic, John, and fearing that she would put an end to her own existence if he should take either her, or her child, away by force, the Judge concluded that, on the whole, it was best to let them remain where they were: consoling himself with the reflection, that his nephew, (who had not been made a foreign secretary, but a consul at an Italian port,) had left behind him his affianced bride, and she would be more practicable.

Notwithstanding the disparity in their ages, he could pass, he thought, a very pleasant summer with her; a few weeks at Abbeville and the remainder at the White Sulphur Springs in Virginia, and Nahant.

Before leaving, he was kind enough to call upon the invalid slave-mechanic, and after expressing a regret at his situation, gave him a few dollars. He had a farewell word, too, for several old negroes, male

and female, who had been left to him many years before by his father; and as he sat in his carriage, he tossed a handful of silver coin to a group of importunate yellow girls, who in times past had enjoyed his "favours." His foreman had suffered twenty or thirty of the most serviceable field-hands to take a stand where they could see him pass, upon his way to Charleston, and when, with one accord, they shouted "Good bye, massa!" and threw up their dilapidated hats (which constituted the larger share of their clothing,) the Judge smiled graciously, and directed the obsequious overseer to give them a holiday. Whereupon, they cheered more lustily than before, and cut up many mad antics: one excitable young negro, going so far, in his wild enthusiasm, as to turn half-a-dozen "cartwheels," as the feat is called, and finish off by casting himself down, under the horses, in order that the wheels might pass over him; which indeed they did, without doing him any apparent injury.

What stranger, witnessing those parting scenes between the venerable South Carolinian and his slaves, could have entertained a doubt of the patriarchal beauty of the peculiar institution?

Proceeding to Charleston, the Judge was hospitably and even joyfully received by Rev. Mr. Duprez, the Huguenot clergyman and his family; and after he had sojourned with them for a few days, the daughter accompanied him to Abbeville.

Meanwhile, Lu Wright, relieved from his demands upon her attention, was still more useful than she had been, to the necessitous creatures to whom she administered.

The summer, which succeeded, was more sickly than usual. Added to the customary diseases of the season, a fatal epidemic raged in South Carolina and Georgia, and the mortality was rapidly rendering the graveyards so many colonies of the dead. The long, dark Spanish moss, hanging like mourning weeds from the limbs of the forest trees of the "Palmetto State," was never more appropriate. Dame Nature, herself, seemed widowed.

The rice country fared badly, and no white man who could get away from the plantations, remained to encounter a disease so deadly. Judge Gascon's slaves enjoyed no immunity from the sickness, and many of them became its victims. An unspeakable fear brooded upon, and almost palsied, every heart. No; there were two persons upon the plantation, who moved hither and thither among the ranks of fallen men, women and children, unterrified: they were Lu and Waifwood. The former, as I have said, had no horror of de cease, and the latter was too young to know her own danger. As long as strength lasted, the mother and child, in defiance of the mortal shafts which death was winging to so many hearts around them, continued their visits and attentions to the sick and dying.

The reckless girls and men who had cared little for Waifwood's Bible-reading previous to the epidemic, now listened gladly as the almost angelic creature, in lisping accents, proclaimed to them from the inspired Word the grace of God for the penitent, and the way to die in the hope of a blessed immortality through the atoning blood of Jesus. She had learnt to sing

some sweet hymns—the “Year of Jubilee,” and others—and the huts of the poor slaves often resounded with the pious melodies.

Catching some of the inspiration of the little evangelist, John, the mechanic, grew strong in religious ardor, and believing it to be his duty to bear witness to the faith that was in him, arose from his sick-bed, one Sabbath day, to preach the Gospel to his fellow-slaves. The black man was not merely an ingenious worker in wood and metals: he could read and write, and had a command of language and persuasion, that rose to the heights of eloquence, under the divine afflatus of Christian zeal. Addressing from the piazzas of his master’s house, the slaves who had gathered to enjoy the novelty of a “sarmint from Cannic John,” he astonished them by his knowledge of the Scriptures and his skilful application of certain passages to their conditions of bondage and sin, and the visitation of God’s anger in the epidemic which was scourging the plantation, as a warning to them to “flee from the wrath to come.” Speaking under the influence of strong emotion himself, it was impossible for their susceptible feelings not to sympathize with him.

The appeal went home to their trembling hearts, and when Waifwood at the close of the exhortation, assisted by Lu and the preacher, sang the hymn, “Come ye weary, heavy-laden,” the indications of penitence were such as only negroes can express with an extravagance of manner that would be ludicrous but for its evident sincerity: and when the services were concluded, many of the little congregation of slaves, who had now witnessed, for the first time,

upon the plantation, the public worship of God, shook Cannic John (ever afterwards called "Preacher John,") by the hand, and begged him to hold forth again in the afternoon.

From that day forward, Judge Gascon's plantation, instead of being as it had been, one of the most demoralized places in South Carolina, grew to be one of the most religious and orderly; and though the master did not live to witness it, his heirs reaped no small advantage from the change. The Sabbath, there, became better than a thousand common days to the poor bondmen. John continued faithfully to dispense the bread of life, for many years. I recollect his preaching, with pleasure, and the hymn-singing of his congregation is among the most agreeable of my "musical" memories.

A few weeks after the Judge had left the rice-plantation, when the cares of her position were rapidly increasing, Lu received from him a letter, written ostensibly to obtain from her a report of the condition of affairs upon his estate, but really containing all he wanted to say in a postscript, wherein he solicited her to leave that unhealthy locality, and come, with her child, to Abbeville. She replied to the request for a report, but made no response to the postscript. A few days later, and a far more tender missive came to her from the same source. The venerable lover represented that she had become indispensable to his happiness, and if she would accompany him, he would pass the remainder of his days with her in Paris, or some other continental city, and she should have her freedom, and live like a lady. Her reply to this offer

was an indignant refusal, couched in such terms as led him to close the correspondence, and to entertain towards her a feeling of deep resentment.

It will be seen, in the sequel that he carried that feeling within him, to the day of his death.

CHAPTER XLV.

"IT IS AN ILL WIND, &c."

MY tour of the country, (to which I have alluded in a previous chapter,) had led me, early in July, as far as Abbeville, in a comparatively healthy district in the north-western part of South Carolina; enjoying considerable reputation for the intelligence, refinement and aristocratic character of its principal inhabitants, and offering natural attractions far superior to those of the eastern, coastwise portion. My friends, Warren and Jerdan, of Georgia, had often urged me to visit that region of their nativity, and while I was in Washington, induced me to accept at their hands letters of introduction to several gentlemen, amongst whom (as luck would have it,) Judge Gascon was one. Calling at the residence of the latter, I found it to be a mansion quite creditable to his good taste and liberal expenditure; resembling, in its beautiful groves and parks, some of the baronial estates in Europe, yet not finer, I think, than many that I have seen in the more cultivated portions of the northern states. The approach to the house from the road was by a gravelled

walk, through a grove of mingled orange and fig-trees. It was only one story high, but covered considerable ground, and was surrounded by a deep piazza, which was partially trellised and ornamented with grape vines in full bearing.

The Judge was absent, (I was informed by a young gentleman, in a white linen suit, whom I found, novel in hand, swinging in a net-work hammock, under the front piazza,) having taken his departure, a few days before, for Georgia.

"My letter of introduction may as well be left with you, sir, though it is too late to be of service," I remarked. "I presume you are a relative of Judge Gascon?"

"No, sir; only his private secretary," he replied, quickly turning out of the hammock, and opening the letter; then bowing deferentially and extending his hand, (while a glow of welcome illuminated a countenance a shade darker than Lu's, though he was a white man,) he exclaimed, "Major, you are a thousand times welcome! In the absence of my principal, suffer me to do the honors. Hannibal, Hannibal! come here."

This call was responded to by the appearance of a fine old colored gentleman—a slave, who acted in the capacity of butler. He, too, was very smiling and gracious, yet with an evident consciousness of the dignity of his master and the responsibility of his own position, especially upon the coming of a visitor. My arrival made at least a ripple in the dull monotony of their quiet household. Guests are god-sends to all such establishments, and even my good steed, Jack, was

made the honored companion in the stable of a stud of horses, whose groom boasted that two of them were brothers to the great "Bascomb," and "Ozark," and two others were sired by the famous northern stake-taker, "Postboy."

If I had been a duke, the secretary and the household over which he reigned viceroy, could not have treated me with more attention; though I have not a doubt that the bigger the title the greater the pleasure would have been to them, for their pains.

The secretary informed me with evident gratification that the following day being the Fourth of July was to be celebrated in the village by a magnificent public dinner, at which only citizens of the highest respectability would be present; and he would procure me a ticket. It was hoped that John C. Calhoun, himself, would be there; but he felt safe in warranting speeches from several of South Carolina's most eloquent sons; amongst them, one or more, members of the Convention which had formed the new Constitution.

The great national holiday dawned upon Abbeville without the customary noise of cannon and bells, recommended by John Adams; from which I inferred that the patriots of the place were not very enthusiastic. At the dinner I looked for a more grateful remembrance of "the day we celebrate," but did not see it. There were present about a hundred gentlemen, composed evidently of the oligarchy ruling the State. The great staple of southern conversation, Cotton, (usually excluding science, philosophy, literature, social progress, and everything but politics,) was now tempo-

rarily overslaughed by the momentous topic of the South Carolina interpretation of the Federal Compact, and the determination of all ruling minds, in the State, to defend its sovereign rights against even the shadow of a doubt, and to hurl defiance at all who caviled at their dogma. Their emente, in 1832, had been squelched by the iron hand of Andrew Jackson, and they had tacitly subsided into outward conformity to the national laws, but though the volcanic crater ceased to pour forth fire and flame, there was hot lava in the heart of it, still, and what with the agitation caused by the State Convention and the excitement created by John Quincy Adams' defence of the right of petition, in Congress, the haughty and irascible spirit of South Carolina was at the fever heat.

Such was the temper of the dinner assemblage on the Fourth of July, 1837 or '8, in Abbeville. A copious flow of champagne mellowed it in a degree, modifying its savageness into a somewhat jubilant tone of defiance, which afforded all the point there was to the speeches and sentiments of several Hotspurs who had grown up at the feet of Calhoun and Rhett and the rest of the prophets of the Palmetto State. It was evident, they were thoroughly satisfied that South Carolina was the bravest and noblest commonwealth, on this continent, and though every other State should sink, "she, in her glorious freedom and true independence was destined to grow more and more chivalric and sublime, to the last syllable of recorded time."

I put the last words in quotation marks, because I found them upon a ragged morsel of note paper in my hat, when I took it up at the conclusion of the festival,

For a better reason than its burden of florid sentiment, I have preserved that little scrap of paper to this day. Its interest to me was in the fragment of a letter, written in a female hand upon the other side of it, wherein, as I was about dropping it upon the floor, I saw the name of Lu mentioned. "Could it be the Lu I sought?" Crushing the paper in my hand, I left the hall and detaching myself from Gascon's secretary (whose condition, like that of many others present, was such as to render a bed or sofa very desirable,) I repaired to a room where I could examine the torn document, unnoticed.

The toast had been written upon the fragment with a pencil, probably at the table, in the height of the festival, by the person to whom the note had been addressed, and dropped accidentally, or thrown down, by him upon leaving the room, and fallen into my castor. Be that as it may, the other side bore the following fragment of words and sentences.—

*"given me a house-keeper
er upon a condition. I had
gance in paying such a price
for the girl Lu (though I have
she is invaluable) and I told him
e not fetch half that price if put up
there declared she should be shortly
to the highest bidder and if not sold
nd dollars, she should be mine to begin
he return from his consulate. Enclosed
your authority to sell. No one will buy
unt her as good as mine. You will give
a pair of horses, and father a house, and *
correspondents will write to me at Aug * *
I am nearly well but not so strong as * * *."*

This was all that I could obtain from my precious scrap of somebody's correspondence. That it was of deep concern to the mother of Waifwood, I had no doubt, but neither the name of the writer, nor that of the person to whom the letter had been addressed, was to be found upon it. I returned to the dining-room, hoping to find another piece of the missive, but without success. I inferred however, that as the writer was to be addressed at Augusta, Lu, also, might be in that city. Who could her owner be? Was her child with her? Had the sale, alluded to in the letter already occurred? These were my mental inquiries, to which, of course, there was no satisfactory response.

Returning to Judge Gascon's elegant residence, I awaited, impatiently, the return of the fuddled secretary; with no idea, however, that either he or his employer, had any knowledge of the object of my solicitude. As the young man had treated me with so much ceremony, himself, I thought it due to him, that I should not depart without bidding him farewell, in person: besides, I felt now that I should have a use for my letter of introduction. However, as he did not return that night, and had not made his appearance in the morning, I took my leave of the venerable major-domo, Hannibal, at an early hour, and started for Augusta, Georgia; a very pleasant little city about one hundred and twenty miles, by rail, from Charleston, South Carolina.

If I had found the latter city very unhealthy, the former was still more so. Augusta, usually a healthy place enough, was now suffering piteously from an

epidemic, closely resembling the yellow fever. Friends in Charleston had remonstrated with me against my journey. Go, rather, they said, to the mountains, to the North, to sea—anywhere but to Augusta. My incentive to proceed, however, had been greater than my fear. Indeed, I regarded myself as almost sickness proof. I own, though, to a feeling of sadness as I passed through the almost deserted streets, whose grass-grown pavement the numerous China trees never shaded with fuller or more verdant foliage. Most of the stores upon the main road were closed, or tended mainly by negroes.

I stopped at the house of a friend and knocked at the door. No one came to answer my summons. While I still waited, a private carriage was driven up to the front, and a colored fellow who had rode upon the box with the driver, jumped down and opened the door of it. A tall, lank, sedentary-looking personage, in a black suit and white cravat, then emerged from it and, after a tremulous look at the dwelling, ascended the steps. Recognizing the colored boy from the carriage as a servant of my friend's, I inquired anxiously about his master's family. They had all gone, he said to the Sand-Hills—a less unhealthy place, two or three miles distant; leaving his affairs in the hands of a gentleman, who, though well enough the day before was now sick in the house, with not a soul to attend him. Past the help of a doctor, as he thought, he had sent for a clergyman.

The latter bowed to me, stiffly, and pulling up, very carefully, a white muffler which he wore, followed the negro through the hall, to a room where the sick

man lay. But he did not enter: he was too cautious for that. Holding his hand to keep the tainted atmosphere of the apartment out of his nostrils, which were not shielded by his cloth, he thrust in his head a little way and speaking through the muffler, said "Sorry, sorry! must go to the hospital."

"No, I'll be bagged if he does!" exclaimed a stalwart, burly man, pushing him aside with an oath, and entering the room.

"A pretty minister of the Gospel you are, sir, to come here with your nose in a clout, afraid to enter where your duty calls you!" he added, "go home; I'll take care of this man. He shall not go to the hospital."

"By what authority—" said the discomfited minister, falteringly, and paused; for he was interrupted by the strong man.

"I am William Cumming, Mayor of Augusta," said he; whereupon the clergyman incontinently stumbled back over my feet and hurried to his carriage.

"I would go at once," said I, "to my friend Mr. Roberts, this poor fellow's employer, and bring some aid to him, but I have no conveyance."

"Stop that carriage!" exclaimed Cumming, and ran to the door, "Mr. Mulkin," he shouted to the reverend gentleman who had just seated himself, "I will trouble you with a passenger."

"Not the sick man!" exclaimed the sham philanthropist, aghast.

"No; but this gentleman," said Cumming, pointing to me, who now stood by his side upon the walk

"will ride with you to the Sand-Hills, to Mr. Roberts' residence and send me a nurse for the poor fellow, in-doors, whom you shun as if he were an imbodyed pestilence: to your shame be it spoken. Get in, sir," he added, pushing me gently into the vehicle, "and come or send back as soon as you can. I will do what I can for the sick man until then, but I have many others to care for, and must get away, in an hour if possible."

Then closing the coach door, and bidding the colored man upon the box to drive with all his might, the energetic functionary hastened back to the patient, whose life he was afterwards mainly instrumental in saving.

I saw and heard much of this remarkable mayor, subsequently, during the prevalence of the epidemic, and conceived a high opinion of his humanity, fearlessness, and efficiency in the discharge of his duties both as a man and a magistrate in that season of the plague." While other fled affrighted and dismayed—many deserting even their own kindred—William Cumming remained not only without dread, but appearing, by his exposure to the disease, even in its worst haunts, to defy its power to attack his iron constitution.

Nor did his indefatigable labors to arrest the epidemic, and relieve its victims, seem to wear him out. It was said, that the only sleep he got during that terrible period, was in his chair at night in the belfry of a church where he kept a look-out for fires.

Mayor Cumming was a native Georgian, and an honor to a state, which, though it has had its share of able men, and good people generally, never produced a truer Howard, or a hero worthy of a higher place in her history.

CHAPTER XLVI.

AN ILLUSTRIOUS VICTIM.

UPON leaving the house into which the humane magistrate had returned, the carriage in which I was a passenger, rattled over the pavement at a rapid rate, precluding by its noise any conversation between me and its reverend proprietor, if we had been so inclined. Not a word was exchanged, until, upon arriving in front of a handsome house upon the outskirts of the Sand-Hills, our attention was attracted by a little, gray, weasel-faced, active old gentleman, with nothing upon his head but a pair of spectacles which he had thrown back upon its bald and shining top. Standing at the side of the road over which we were dashing at a stiff pace, he shouted to us to stop. As he had both hands raised, and gave other indications of the pressing importance of his message, I bade our driver to "hold up," and he reined in his horses, as quick as he could.

"Doctor Mulkin," said the old man, coming up almost out of breath, and bowing, "you will be most

welcome in the house. Judge Gascon, of South Carolina, you know is there, sick. To-day he is worse. I have just drawn his will, which he wishes some respectable gentleman to witness. All have deserted the house, except Miss Duprez, (his niece I believe she is,) and she herself is ill again. It is a fearful time—terrible, terrible, sir!” and the notary wrung his hands, so expressively that it made the timid man by my side tremble with fear.

“I—I—I can’t stop now, Mr. Lucas,” he stammered. “I am acting under the Mayor’s orders. I have a most imperative commission. Have got to go to Mr. Roberts’ and hurry with all speed back to Mayor Cumming. A case of life and death, sir!”

“That gentleman, then,” said the notary, pointing to me, “will perhaps do us the favor? For God’s sake, sir; for the sake of humanity, sir; get out and come in to our assistance!”

“Do, my good sir!” chimed in the clergyman, “and I will hasten with our message to Mr. Roberts, who shall call for you when my driver shall have dropped me at my own residence, which is but a little out of the way.”

“I readily complied, not only because it was Judge Gascon who implored help, but from the natural impulse to aid a fellow-being in distress; and, leaving the carriage to proceed upon its way in safety, followed the quick-stepping lawyer into the infected dwelling.

Mr. Lucas had not been literally correct in saying that all the family had either died or deserted. Through the open door of a chamber I saw, as we

went by it, an aged negress fanning the flies from a pale-looking young lady who was propped up in an easy chair. It was Miss Duprez, (the notary said,) attended by old aunt Rosy. Passing on, Mr. Lucas conducted me into another apartment, from which a fetid smell proceeded; assuring me of the presence of disease.

There, upon a richly furnished bed—his head and shoulders supported by pillows, lay a haggard but intellectual-looking old gentleman, writhing at the moment under a sharp pang of the sickness which afflicted him.

“It is Judge Gascon,” said the notary to me, and went to his assistance. Dr. McFarlane, of New Orleans, had given me some idea of the symptoms and proper treatment of yellow-fever, and I took the liberty to put what little I knew to good use in the Judge’s case. Soon, through the free use of brandy and friction, I had the satisfaction of rallying the patient out of a collapse into which he was falling when the spasm subsided; and by continuing the rubbing, all over him, (by no means neglecting his lower limbs and feet,) in the course of an hour I had imparted to him so much electricity from my own healthy system, that he appeared like another man.

Then, I informed him who I was, and how recently I had been entertained at his residence, at Abbeville. He had heard of me, he said, through his Washington friends; and, with a politeness of manner not common in sick-rooms, expressed his pleasure and gratitude at my presence and prompt service in his hour of need. “Would I witness his signature to a will which his

old friend, Mr. Lucas, had drawn at his request?" Of course, I could offer no objection.

"Major," said the invalid, "I am a thousand times your debtor. Suffer me, now, to request you to leave me alone with Mr. Lucas for a few minutes, but do not go beyond call. I may ask your aid in a more agreeable sphere than a sick-room. The house is in a sad, dusty, condition, I fear, since such of its surviving inmates, as were well enough to get away, left it; but you will find books and magazines in the room directly under this, and some good wine and cigars in the side-board, to amuse you. Pray, make yourself as much at home as is possible under the circumstances."

Descending to the apartment indicated, I saw, from the window, the old slave, Rosy, coming from the hen-house, with a defunct chicken in either hand.

"Oh deary me, deary me!" she exclaimed, with a rueful face, as I attracted her attention; "dar's two more of the fowls done gone dead of de malady!" and in confirmation of her words, she held up the poultry and pointed to the projecting tongues of the feathered victims of the same fatal malaria that was killing off the human population.

"Four chick'ns died last night, and now here's two more!" she cried, dolefully. "Oh what will massa and missus do to me when dey comes back?"

"They will know that the fowls died of the epidemic, and not through any fault of yours, aunty," I replied; but still she took on sorely as she went away grumbling that they had no business to die upon her hands.

I was making good progress in the "Pickwick

Papers," and a cigar, when Mr. Lucas entered the room, and inquired if he should trouble me to go for nurses—one a male and the other a female—for the sick people up-stairs. The remnant of the Musgrove family when they departed so abruptly, had left behind them two capable persons to take care of Judge Gascon and Miss Duprez, but unfortunately one of those attendants had since died of the fever, and the latter had robbed the house and decamped, with no fear of pursuit. Aunt Rosy had remained faithful, but she had as much as she could do in the kitchen. "Would I be so good as to take some pains in the matter?"

"The Judge has a high esteem for you, sir," added the notary, and wishes to confer with you to-morrow in relation to an important commission which he desires to entrust to a responsible and judicious person. In the meantime, I will remain with him until you shall have taken this letter to Dr. Eve, and brought the nurses whom he may recommend."

"Is there any conveyance better than these?" I inquired with a glance at my feet. Lucas smiled, and replied, that there was a horse and saddle in the barn.

"That will do," I rejoined, and was hurrying out of the room when he remarked that I might meet Dr. Eve on the way. "He is a tall, slim man, with a studious, absent look, and rides a white horse."

I was soon mounted and on my way to Augusta. In front of my friend Roberts' city residence, where I had met the Mayor, I saw a lank, white Bucephalus, a little the worse for wear. Alighting and going

in, I found Roberts and Dr. Eve at the bedside of the poor salesman, who now seemed to be doing pretty well.

My friend was glad to see me, but leaving him with his clerk, I drew the Doctor aside and delivered the letter. He shook his head, sadly as he finished reading the hasty scrawl, and told me that it was almost impossible to obtain what I was in quest of; so great was the demand for nurses, and so few the number whom fear had not unfitted for the duty. However, he would give me the address of half a dozen, to whom I might apply.

Taking down the names he mentioned, I lost no time in visiting their residences, or rather, I should say the residences of such as were still living; for two of them had died since morning. The others were either already engaged, or unwilling to accompany me, at any price. My offer of ten dollars a day for their services, was no temptation: so overpowering was their fear of the disease. Unwilling to return unsuccessful, I crossed the river which divides Georgia from South Carolina, and pursued my quest in the little town of Hamburg. After losing some hours there, I was directed to the cabin of a poor white family some miles beyond. It was sundown, but, resolved to accomplish something, I pushed on, and at nine o'clock, at night, reached the house designated.

To my unspeakable astonishment, the first object that met my sight as I entered the homely dwelling, was my old friend, McClure, sitting at a table, upon which a corn-dodger and a coffee pot were smoking,

alongside a platter of "chicken-fixens," from which the good woman of the house was filling his plate. Nor was his surprise and joy less than my own.

After a most hearty greeting, and the interchange of many questions and replies, I sat down to the repast with him, and we partook of the frugal fare with *à gusto* good to see.

He was on his way to Charleston, to transact some business relative to a large amount of money which he had in bank, there. He did not like to admit it, but I suspected that his reason for making the journey upon horse-back, was his want of confidence in the safety of either railroads or steamboats. The locomotive, at that time a novelty in the South, (comparatively a new thing to the whole country, indeed,) he regarded as a piece of machinery strongly illustrating the reckless daring and temerity of the fast race which had come forward since his day; and he was free to say that he did not think it just to that faithful animal, the God-created horse, to oust him from the track to make way for a man-made "steam-ingine."

It was so late and the night so dark, that I was easily persuaded to share the only spare bed there was in the house with the old hunter; the landlord and his wife promising to accompany me to the aid of Judge Gascon in the morning.

After all had retired to rest, McClure and I conversed freely relative to our mutual experience since we had parted. In regard to Lu and her child he appeared to be satisfied that they had been entrapped by old Wright, and either sold, or carried away by them to Kentucky, where the Squire and his wife had

been making a protracted visit amongst their own relatives.

"Howsever," added McClure, "little Waifwood may not be lost to us, yet. Suthin' tells me you will find her, Major, and I want you to take keer o' the money I have in the bank for her. It would be a sin for me to touch a cent on't. I'm monsus sorry you can't go along with me to Charleston to help me fix the business at the bank, Major. Maybe Lu's thar, for all that gal in Augusta has writ."

"Can't you postpone going thither for a little time?" I asked. "It is very sickly there, as well as in Augusta, and you had much better stop in some more healthy place, on the route, for a week or two; or even return home, and take a fresh start when the epidemic shall have abated."

"Oh no, thankee, Major: I'm as tough as a pine-knot, and shall do well enough," he rejoined. "But I'll call on you at Augusta, on the back-track, and trust to your keer my stifkit of possit, I believe you call it."

"Certificate of deposit, I presume you mean," said I.

"Yes," he rejoined "that's it. Good night, Major;" and turning to the log wall, the old man fell asleep.

In the morning we breakfasted and parted; McClure going eastward, and I heading towards Augusta, followed, in a rickety old open wagon, by our host and his wife.

Before reaching the Sand-Hills, we passed not less than eight funeral processions, besides a number of

wagons the appearance of whose burdens indicated that they, too, were bearing additions to the city of the dead: (one of the sanitary regulations of that period requiring that those who died of the epidemic during the night, should be buried as early as practicable the next morning;) and it was with something like a dark presentiment—though I despise such notions—that I stopped in front of the almost deserted dwelling of the Musgroves, where, notwithstanding his great wealth and social position, they, who had usually been almost obsequious in their attentions to their distinguished guest, had, in their cowardly panic, abandoned Judge Gascon to the care of hirelings.

Why should my heart sink within me as I alighted from my horse, and conducted my two companions into the house? I had left the Judge in a very promising condition. Alas! my fears were prophecy. Mr. Lucas approached me, with a subdued manner, and in a sad tone said, as he grasped my hand, "My dear sir, you are too late: Judge Gascon is dead. It is hardly an hour since he breathed his last!"

"My God," I cried, "is it possible? I hoped for his recovery."

He appeared in a hopeful way throughout the night," rejoined the notary, "and conversed a great deal with me in regard to his affairs, and some minor matters dear to his heart: giving in the meantime, some important directions, and frequently asking if you had returned. (You will learn, Major, by-and-by, how great a regard he had conceived for you.) Fatigued by my protracted watching, and professional service at his bedside, I had fallen into a doze, about

daybreak, when I was aroused by a cry, or groan, and starting to my feet, found the Judge in a state of collapse. I did my best to save him, but alas! I lacked your large supply of vitality, and he died such a death as I pray God I may never again witness. Impotent to help him, all I could do was to hold before his despairing eyes my little crucifix and recommend his struggling soul to the intercession of the Holy Virgin:” and crossing himself as he concluded, the good Roman Catholic gentleman led the way into the chamber of death.

I will not sadden the heart of the kind reader with a picture so terrible: at its ghastly reality, the man and his wife whom I had brought with me, fled from it, appalled. I took little heed of their retreating footsteps, and when I saw them, a few minuter later, departing in their rickety old wagon, without a word of farewell, I was not sorry. A longer exposure of their health would have been superfluous; one of their intended patients being past all human aid, while the other (Miss Duprez,) was on her way to South Carolina; her friends having removed her, that morning.

CHAPTER XLVII.

CLOUDS AND SUNSHINE.

"So, Judge Gascon died at sunset?" I remarked to the venerable negress, as she placed upon a little table in the library, a broiled fowl and a plate of bread, alongside a smoking urn of coffee, for my refreshment.

"Yas, sar, I reckon 'twar 'bout sunrise," she replied, with a sigh, "but I 'low I was so full ob grief for de chickns, dat I didn't tuck no notice, adzackly. Oh, massa! (and she burst out a-crying,) four more o' de chick'ns died, last night! What will, oh what will missus say, when she kims home?"

"Never mind that, aunty," I rejoined, "but take this fowl away. My appetite for poultry, this morning, has all gone."

With a lugubrious shake of her head, the poor soul removed the dish, grumbling, as she went, that she supposed, "de gemman's appetite will kim back, when dar am no more chick'ns, and den dey'll scole old aunty."

When she had retired, I opened a letter which was handed to me by the benevolent little man, Lucas, as

he was leaving the house for the purpose of procuring a leaden coffin, in which to have the corpse sealed up for removal to the Judge's estate at Abbeville, where we presumed it would be more satisfactory to the relatives and friends of the deceased to have the burial take place. Having both leisure and inclination for the service, I had gratified the notary by volunteering to attend the remains thither.

"Your humane offer," he remarked at the time, "accords well with what the Judge said of you when conversing so freely with me while we were both deluded with the hope of his recovery. 'While,' said he, 'old friends (and even my house-keeper,) neglected my demands upon their attention in this emergency, this young officer, until to-day almost a stranger to me, perils his life to aid me; and this, not from any hope of compensation, or on account of my wealth and position, but, as I verily believe, from the most disinterested of motives. Nevertheless he shall be rewarded. Take up your pen again, my old stand-by, (that's what he called me," said the notary in parenthesis,) "and, to guard against contingencies, write a letter from me to him.' I complied, and he directed the document which you have now in your hand. Read it, my dear Major, and give it, I beg of you, your favorable consideration: remembering that it is the dying request of a dignitary, who with all his faults, (and he confessed many to me in his last hours,) had many uncommonly good traits and some noble qualities; in short a man who was, on the whole, without a superior in South Carolina; and with few, if any, even in Virginia, (where, though of Irish descent, I am free

to say, I was myself born, and raised.) When I come back," added the notary, "and our arrangements for the removal are complete, I will ta'k with you more fully about a matter which you will find alluded to in the Judge's communication."

The little man, with the big heart, had mounted and rode away, and now over my corn-dodger and coffee, I opened the letter and read as follows:—

"MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND!

"Though I hope with God's permission, to recover from the terrible disease by which I am now prostrated, (and which; but for your own kind offices, must have ended my existence ere this,) it will do no hurt to put in writing, per hand of Mr. Lucas, my emanuensis, what I hope to have the opportunity of repeating to you in person.

"I am aware, from what the Hon. Mr. Warren has written to me, that you have a long furlough, and doubt not it can be almost indefinitely extended, or renewed from time to time. You are probably at liberty then to visit Europe. Have you the inclination? I hope so. Let me explain why.

"I have a protege—you may call her my ward, if you like—who, though still a mere child, has already displayed a remarkable talent (I call it genius,) for drawing and coloring, and even designing; together with a fair taste for music: and these characteristics being united with beauty of person and superior mind, have rendered her worthy, in my estimation, of such an education as shall best contribute to the full development and cultivation of her extraordinary natural gifts.

"Unfortunately, there is a blemish upon the origin of this young creature, and with a view to shield her from its consequences as much as possible, I think it best that she should be educated in Europe, and, perhaps, permanently reside there.

"Various circumstances, amongst which is the extremely unhealthy condition of the country at present, (which makes me fear for her safety,) render it desirable that her removal should occur immediately. My health precluding the possibility of my accompanying her, will you, my dear sir, (pardon, I beseech you, the liberty I take!) act in my stead in this matter, and take the child under your charge to a fitting place in Europe? She is a girl six or seven years of age, and so good and intelligent that she will give you little trouble; and I will supply ample means for what it may cost you in time and money.

"I desire that you will use your own discretion as to the choice of teachers, studies and locality; having every confidence in your judgment to conduct the matter satisfactorily, if you will only undertake it. And will you not? Bear in mind, I entreat you, that it is of vital moment to the life-long welfare of one of the best creatures that ever breathed, the breath of life. In the spring or the following autumn, at the latest, I hope to be in Europe, and will then relieve you of the trust now implicitly confided to your care.

"Should I be unable to communicate with you orally upon your return from your present humane expedition for my benefit, Mr. Lucas, my attorney, will speak farther with you upon this subject, and put you in funds to execute this commission with a liberality of expenditure appropriate to my wealth, and consonant with my hearty interest in the child and warm personal regard for yourself.

Your grateful friend, &c."

Without having the faintest conception of an idea, that the extraordinary commission, thus thrust upon me, concerned her in the least, this letter excited in me the most affectionate remembrances of my own quondam pet, little Waifwood, and reminded me that in the accidental crowd of exciting circumstances

which had occupied my attention to the exclusion of other subjects, since I had entered Augusta, I had neglected to make my intended inquiry after Lu and her child.

Surely, small as was their claim upon me, it was greater than that of the deceased Judge and the protege in whom his appeal aimed to create in me so great an interest! True, a voyage to Europe was just the jaunt that I had long wanted to take, and the desire had been much increased since an esteemed Boston friend, a landscape-painter, (destined to achieve fame abroad as well as at home,) had written to me that he was about to leave for Florence, with a view of establishing a studio and residence, there. The usual insuperable obstacle in the way of many was mine. My pay, never large, had not admitted of my saving much, and since my first trip across, ten years previous, I had not been able to bring myself to believe that I could afford another trans-atlantic voyage. Now, Providence seemed to have thrown in my way an excellent opportunity, only to try the sincerity of my sympathy for Lu and Waifwood.

In the midst of my reflections, while I was again inspecting the fragment of letter relating to the poor woman, the bustling little notary returned with an undertaker.

In the course of an hour the body was enclosed in the leaden casket, and that in a wooden box, and taken to the railroad station.

"You are as strong as a giant Major!" exclaimed Lucas, when he had recovered his breath, after the exertion of aiding us in lifting the heavy case into the

undertaker's wagon. "But come in; we have some important matters to talk over and not more than ten minutes to do it in, before you will have to start for the train. What do you say to the proposal made in poor Gascon's letter?"

"Really," said I, pausing upon the piazza, and offering the good Samaritan a seat, (for I saw that he was completely worn-out by the fatigue that he had undergone during the last forty-eight hours,) "I cannot decide to accept the foreign commission until I have discharged the trust which I have undertaken in regard to the corpse. That will give me time for consideration. I will accompany it to Abbeville, and after passing a day in Charleston return to you, and give you an answer: or in case I decline the business abroad, will communicate the fact by mail."

"But my dear, dear sir!" protested the notary, "you must not decline. The funds which the poor Judge had with him to defray the expenses of his summer tour, (so summarily terminated,) he gave into my custody just before he died. The amount exceeds five thousand dollars. My instructions are to deliver it to you for the joint expenses of yourself and the child Waifwood—"

"Waifwood?" cried I, rising impulsively from the seat which I had taken by his side, "Waifwood? Surely there can be but one Waifwood in the world? Have I at last found her?"

Moved by my excited manner, the dear little bald-headed old gentleman forgot his fatigue, and rising to his feet, gazed at me, in surprise.

"Do you know," he asked, "aught of that child's

curious history? She is a daughter of a house-keeper upon Judge Gascon's rice plantation. Lu Wright, he called her."

"Thank God, the clue is found!" I exclaimed, joyfully, "and Providence has again made me its humble instrument to brighten the welfare of this unhappy woman and her child."

"Is it possible that they hold such a place in your regard?" cried the well-pleased notary. "Then I may conclude that you no longer hesitate to comply with the dying request of Judge Gascon?"

"No, I accept the trust, gladly," I replied, grasping his hand: "but has the Judge made no provision for the mother?"

"Nothing to her advantage," replied Mr. Lucas. "Unfortunately she had never taken any pains to please him, and in his sickness refused to come to his aid. Hence, although he placed an almost fabulous value upon her capacity, (as I inferred from much that he said about her in his last hours,) he entertained towards her no little indignation for what he called her ingratitude. Offending him with some words in her behalf, (though I never saw her,) he avoided the subject afterwards, but I believe that it was his wish that her child should be so far removed from her that the two should never meet again, lest the relationship should mar his favorite project for the daughter's advancement. But my dear sir!" cried the little man, taking hold of my arm and urging me into the house, "you must make ready and be off, or you will be too late for the train. I will meet you at the office of Judge Gascon's banker, in Charleston, day after to-morrow, at

one o'clock. Here is his address upon a letter introducing you, and containing a check in Gascon's own hand. You will readily find the place. There we will have a long talk together, and consummate the arrangements by which you will be made the child's guardian, and be put in funds for the expenses likely to be incurred on her account. Now come, I don't want to hurry you, but you have not a minute to spare!"

In a few moments, I was hastening to the cars, and half an hour later speeding along behind an engine through the doleful swamps and palmetto woods of South Carolina.

The first man to accost me, upon reaching Charleston, was my sturdy old friend, with the stalwart form and game-leg—I mean McClure. He fairly hugged me in his arms, to the great amusement of the by-standers. Our hearty greeting over, he informed me that I had arrived just in time; for he was about to take the train for Augusta.

While I was yet conversing with McClure, near the cars, I heard my name called by some one in the crowd, and, the next moment, my hand was squeezed by a gentleman, whom I immediately recognized as my entertainer at Abbeville, the secretary of the late Judge Gascon. He informed me, that having received intelligence that his employer was dangerously ill, he had started immediately to join him.

"If you do that," I replied, "it will not be in this world. The Judge died last night of the epidemic. His remains are in my charge, upon the train which

has just come in. I will now entrust them to your care, to convey to Abbeville."

Other passengers had brought the sad news, and the shocked secretary saw his own surprise and sorrow reflected in many countenances; for while Gascon's vices were little, if any known, his good qualities and accomplishments appeared to be patent to everybody in Charleston. His decease added largely to the general gloom.

Leaving the crowded depot, through an importunate file of colored hack-drivers, I repaired first of all to the Bank in which McClure had already had his deposit of ten thousand dollars transferred to my name, upon the book-keeper's ledger. Identifying me to the cashier as the person who was to hold the amount in trust for Waifwood, in consideration of her taking the name of Waifwood McClure, my old friend requested me to leave my signature with the paying-teller, which I did, and then conducting him to a hotel, left him there, until I should have had time to present the letter of introduction and credit, which I had been requested to deliver to the late Judge Gascon's banker.

I was unexpectedly delayed by two incidents, of some moment in this history. The banker's family resided in the building over his office, and as the Judge had been a frequent visitor there, the money-man took me up-stairs and introduced me to a very elegant woman and two young ladies, after the same pattern, as his wife and daughters, to whom he begged I would relate the circumstances of their deceased patron's last hours. He then left the room, but at the conclusion

of my recital, re-appeared, leading into the parlor, where we sat, a neatly dressed and very beautiful child, who looked to be about seven years of age.

"This charming young creature, sir, was a great favorite of the Judge's," said the banker.

There was no mistaking that expressive countenance; it was my dear little Waifwood! And how she had grown!

Almost immediately, the darling recognized me, and with an exclamation of joy, ran to the arms which had so often held her.

The ladies, meanwhile, regarded our raptures with amazement, and as they knew the child's mother was a slave, I have no doubt they thought me more closely related to her than the law allowed. My pet and I had much to say to each other, but I remembered my waiting friend, and telling the delighted Waifwood that I would conduct her to him (with the consent of the banker, who had received her from the Judge's foreman the same morning, to retain subject to my order,) we were soon on our way, hand in hand, to the hotel where I had left McClure. Then I told my darling how rich the generous old man had made her.

She had already informed me that her mother was in Charleston; having come with her, that morning, from the plantation, and gone, with the overseer, to the residence of a minister named Duprez.

"Mamma wanted very much to have me go along," said she, as we turned into King street; then stopping abruptly in our walk, and pointing to a crowd upon the pavement opposite, exclaimed, "why, there she is, now! Let us go to her."

Sure enough, there stood poor Lu, mounted upon a block, in front of an auction mart, and at her side, a rotund individual talking in a loud, jocose way to a number of citizens who stood around him, within an outer circle composed of white and black idlers.

"Oh, what are they doing with mother?" cried Waifwood, in a tone that went to my heart; while her countenance, pale and trembling, expressed profound alarm, as she almost dragged me across the street, towards the place of sale.

Her exclamation had been caused by the action of Lu. A spectator had raised his hand to her breast, and she indignantly struck it down, to the amazement if not the amusement of the crowd. These people were accustomed to see slaves, that were put up for sale, manipulated at pleasure by the bidders, and it was the acme of audacity in her, they thought, to resist it.

"Hands off, gentlemen," said the auctioneer, ironically: "this fine piece, of property ought to be labelled, like the best fruit at our horticultural exhibitions, Please not to Handle!"

A coarse laugh from the crowd of spectators, through which we were trying to urge our way, followed this sally. It made my own blood hot with indignation, and I presume I was rougher than was entirely reasonable, as I pushed aside all that stood in my way to Lu; for I heard the ranks, which I had so imperiously divided, swear viciously as they closed up behind me and the frightened child.

In the half defiant attitude in which she stood—her teeth compressed, her lips curling with scorn, and

her dark cavernous eyes luminous with the fire that burned in her brain—Lu was worthy of a statue.

“What are the terms of this sale?” I demanded, sternly; addressing the auctioneer.

“I haven’t yet named them, sir,” replied that spherical personage, briskly. “Was about to do so, after reciting the good qualities of the girl, which are manifold, and very uncommon, sir; very sir, very!”

Lu had not taken any notice of our approach: I doubt whether she distinguished any of the faces around her. It was as if she looked beyond all these mere instruments, and confronted with the courage of despair, a mocking spectre invisible to us.

The auctioneer began to recapitulate the qualifications of the valuable chattel now under the hammer, but I checked him, and again demanded the terms.

“You will not be likely to come to them,” he replied, a little irritated at my manner. “They are cash down, and I can’t receive a bid under eight thousand dollars.”

A scornful repetition of the amount issued from several mouths; it was so unusual; twenty-five hundred dollars being the maximum sum paid for the very best kind of slaves at that period of commercial depression: and excellent house-keepers were often sold for much less than that.

I whispered to Waifwood: “are you willing to pay all you possess in the world to release your mother from these men?”

“Yes, yes!” responded the little trembler, at my side; “let them take all: let them take me, too: only make them let mamma go!”

"Your good friend McClure has made you rich: if we buy your mother's freedom you will be very, very poor!" said I, to try her.

"No, no, I shall not," she replied, vehemently, "for mamma is better than the money. Pay it all for her; oh do, do!"

"It is a most abominable outrage in the sight of God," said I, addressing the auctioneer, "that this woman should be offered for sale, but, with a view to her immediate emancipation, I am ready to pay eight thousand dollars for her."

The dealer in his fellow-beings looked astonished, and there was a great straining of necks and eyes, amongst the murmuring crowd, to get a sight at me. If my bid had not argued my possession of considerable wealth, I presume they would have lynched me, but, in the South, the rich are exempt from such rude treatment.

"Mr. Duprez, said the auctioneer, turning to a tall, well-dressed gentleman at his right, who had turned red in the face, and was regarding me with evident displeasure, "will you advance upon his bid?"

Impelled (as I subsequently learned,) by anger, this person offered eight thousand, five hundred. Seeing that it was his purpose to bid against me, I increased my offer at once to ten thousand. I presume my annoyed competitor inferred from my manner, that I had now gone as high as I would, for to the auctioneer's invitations for him to advance five hundred, two hundred and fifty, one hundred, fifty, or even ten, he resolutely shook his head. Lu was then declared my property for the sum of ten thousand dollars.

"What's all this yere about?" cried a voice, proceeding from a stalwart old man, who was pushing his way roughly through the throng which had now crowded more densely than before, around the block, to get a better sight of a slave sold at a price so enormous.

Without seeing me and Waifwood, he exclaimed, as he reached the centre of attraction, "Why Lu, don't you know me? Don't you know your old friend McClure?"

With a short, sharp cry, such as a child might utter when leaping from an object of fear into its parent's arms, Lu broke from her abstraction, and sprung into the embrace of the hunter.

She was sobbing upon the rough yet tender heart whose sympathetic beatings were better than words in the ear which pressed against it, when raising his glistening eyes, suffused with honest tears, he recognized me and Waifwood, who was now weeping for joy, and full of eagerness to hug him and her mother, too.

"Be of good cheer, my old friend!" I exclaimed, slapping him upon the shoulder; "our dear Lu is free, from this hour."

I will not detail what followed: suffice it to say, that the price of Lu's liberty was promptly paid with the amount which had been deposited in the Bank by McClure, in my name as trustee for little Waifwood, and we all supped together at the hotel—a truly thankful and well contented company: only one thing was lacking, as the old man well observed; and that was the presence of his loving "dame," God bless her!

To my great surprise, the bill of sale, which conveyed Lu into my possession, was executed by the very man who had bid against me, Mountfort Duprez. He held a power-of-attorney from the late Judge Gascon. Seeking an explanation, I discovered the key to the fragment of letter which, providentially, had led me to visit Augusta.

One day, Miss Duprez had bantered the Judge for paying so extravagant a price for Lu, to which he had retorted, that she would bring as much if put up for sale, again; if not, she might have her, to begin house-keeping, upon marrying his nephew. The young lady had held him to this promise, and obtained from him a power-of-attorney for her uncle to offer Lu at public sale, with the stipulation that if no higher bid than eight thousand dollars should be made, the woman should become her (Miss Duprez's) property. She was disappointed of course, by my purchase.

CHAPTER XLVIII

MISCHIEF BREWING.

UNFORTUNATELY, though we knew nothing of it, Lu's arch-enemy, Murrell was alive and in the North. Worse yet, he was a denizen of New York, where we were to embark for Europe. This fact had a more serious bearing upon the fate of my two dependent friends than the kind-hearted reader would like to anticipate. Some of the movements of that incorrigible villain, in this connection, became known to me at the time ; and, a few years later, revealed all his operations at all affecting their interests. His presence was the more inopportune for us, because it chanced that the elder Wright, (drawn thither as director in a new mining stock which he was desirous of putting into the New York market,) was there also, and Murrell knew it. Not that the latter had any intention of making his acquaintance : in the simplicity of his heart, his single object was to rob him.

The desperado had ascertained what was old Wright's business there, and shrewdly inferred, that the sale of the mining stock must have put him in possession of a considerable sum of money.

Resolving to put himself in as close proximity to his intended victim as was prudent, he sought lodgings as contiguous as possible to the hotel where the old man was boarding. Luckily, the next building adjoining was a house full of furnished rooms for the accommodation of any who chose to hire them.

"I should like that apartment if it were to let," he remarked to the chubby landlady, as she escorted him to the end of a hall or passage-way, on the third floor. There was a sign on the door, and he read it aloud, "*Dr. Odelle, Surgeon-Dentist.*"

"Bother him, for a thief as he is!" exclaimed the indignant woman; "that is all he's left me for two months rent; is that bit of painted tin. He bilked me entirely. They tell me it's a way he has. You can have that room and the next, if they suit you, for six dollars a week, payable in advance."

"Cheap enough," said Murrell, which made her sorry that she had not asked eight. "Who occupies overhead?"

"A portrait painter," she replied, "but a nice, quiet gentleman that never troubles nobody, and pays reg'lar as a prince. The rooms you looked at below, wont be empty long, I dare-say; but whoever comes into them must be very genteel, for I pride myself on keeping a superior establishment."

It was speedily arranged, and before night the weekly advance was paid and Murrell installed in his new apartments.

He slapped one leg with great self-complacency when he had sat down and taken a look at the brick wall in which the fire-place stood. "I don't believe it is very

thick at that chimney-back," said he to himself; "and as good luck will have it, old Wright's room is just on the other side of it."

It was so; the lodgings were exactly adapted to his purpose. They were separated from the same floor in the hotel by a thin party-wall only, and a knock upon it, in Murrell's room, might have been distinctly heard in Mr. Wright's apartment. Still, that did not prevent the robber from beginning almost immediately, the labor of preparing the means of passing through; for he argued, that it being in broad daylight, the sound would be attributed to some more honest cause.

Locking his door, and removing the fire-board, he took from his trunk a coat in the large leather pockets of which were some burglar's tools. Furnishing himself with a mallet and a small hand pick, he began very carefully to remove a brick. The wall was poor, and the work more dirty than difficult. In half an hour he had removed an entire layer from the back of the fire-place. He could, he fancied, hear voices in Wright's apartment. Presently his attention was attracted by the sound of a carriage in the street below. Thrusting out his begrimed head, unobserved, he was struck with the appearance of a lady accompanied by a gentleman and child, entering the house from the coach, which, loaded with their trunks, remained in front of the door. Listening in the hall, he heard the chattering landlady extolling her accommodations as she proceeded to exhibit the handsomely furnished suite of apartments on the second floor. This was my own little party—Lu, Waifwood and I—little dreaming that in taking these private lodgings, to avoid the annoyance that might attend us in a public

hotel, we were getting into the nest of a serpent that had already stung us more than once.

"The devil is in it, and I'm embarrassed with a profusion of good luck, if my guess is true," said Murrell to himself, as he saw our baggage carried into the house, and the carriage driven off, with me in it; for I availed myself of the conveyance to be carried without delay to the London Packet office, to secure our passage. "I could almost swear that was Lu Wright, with that little girl! Let's see! let's see!" he added, and sank thoughtfully into a seat. "What are they here for? I must see them closer, without being seen myself; at least not to be known. My disguises—I have half a mind to don my woman's dress. Ry is as tall as I am, and I am clean shaved. I have but to change this glass eye of mine for a blue one, and cover the other with a transparent patch, whiten my eyebrows and adopt a light-haired band and cap, and I'm all right." Then swearing with a great oath that he would do it, the adroit scamp produced from his trunk a frock, once the favorite wear of his last wife; a young lady better known to the reader as Ry Ward. This apparel he soon donned; and, accustomed to disguising himself at short notice, speedily effected a marvelous change in his appearance.

"Now," said he, as he adjusted the band and cap, at the glass, "I lack only the bonnet and shawl to make me look like a highly respectable and trustworthy washer-woman; and as such I will straightway make my appearance to the new-comers below stairs, before the gentleman returns: for I must find out what all this means, and what they intend to do, before I leave the house; and that must be to-night—perhaps within an hour or

two—if I get a chance to touch old Wright's money this afternoon. My motto is, courage and despatch, so here's to begin!"

In a few minutes, watching for an opportunity when the passage-ways were clear, the rogue descended the stairs and tapped lightly at a door on the second story. "Come in," was the response, and entering deferentially, he stood before Lu and Waifwood. "Any washing, mem?" said he, in a feigned voice and with a courtesy, while his false heart laughed under his woman's dress. "I wash for the lodger up-stairs; and being a poor widder, mem, which has seen better circumstances and five small childern, would be glad if your ladyship would patternize me."

"We shall not stay here long enough to have any such work done for us," replied Lu, who was engaged in combing her child's luxurious tresses. "Oho!" thought the impostor to himself, "off so soon, hey?" He uttered nothing, however, and only chuckled "Aha," when the joyous little girl added, "because we are going in the vessel on the great ocean!" Lu would fain have checked her, but it was too late. He had heard enough, and, with another courtesy, backed out into the hall; pushing unawares against the chubby landlady as he did so, and treading upon her tender bunion.

"Gracious goodness unto us!" exclaimed the agonized creature, as she hobbled into Lu's room, "what did that woman want? she has gone up-stairs, too."

"She is the laundress, she says, of one of your lodgers," replied Lu. "I should think she wore her flat-irons in her shoes!" said the landlady, testily, taking a seat, and holding on to one foot, quite ruefully. "I wish

she had my bunions, that's all ! deary me ; do you know any thing that's good for them ? Perhaps that creature may know ; when she comes down, I'll ask her."

In the meantime, Murrell had hurried back to his room. The door locked, he lost no time in divesting himself of the female apparel, and resuming his own. He was sorry that he had not avoided the notice of the landlady, but trusted to his good look to escape suspicion. At any rate, he had obtained, by his ruse, a piece of news that he might not have been able to procure in any other way.

It would be well for him, perhaps, to abandon his intended robbery, and make a better thing by betraying Lu and the child to old Wright ; but, then, he hated to give up an enterprise so well begun ; with the money-chest, too, almost in his hand as it were ! So, he commenced anew at his work amongst the rubbish in the chimney. The hole was almost through, when during a brief interval of rest, with pick and mallet in hand, upon his knees on the hearth, he fancied he heard some one at his door. Jumping up he crowded the *debris* of bricks and mortar with his foot into the chimney corner, swept the hearth, and replaced the fire-board, to conceal every trace of his work : then looked to see who it was.

His sudden opening of the door disconcerted the red-faced landlady not a little, for she was down on her knees at the keyhole.

The first impulse of the lawless man was to strangle the poor woman ; but prudently restraining his destructiveness, he quietly listened to her excuses, until the nature of her plea at length elicited from him a loud laugh. The chagrined woman had neither seen nor

heard any thing prejudicial to him, but confessed that the long tarry of the genteel laundress in his room, had excited her curiosity, "for," she added, as she gave a glance around the apartment, "you must know, sir, that I've always kept a respectable house, without no goings-on; and thinks I to myself, no well-conducted female has any need of stopping so long in any gentleman's room; but as I see she ain't here," (and she gave another scrutinizing look; this time under the bed, and into the inner room;) "I hope you'll excuse me, sir. I was only doing my duty to my establishment, you know. Besides, I wanted to ask her what was good for bunions."

"Mrs. Mopps went away some time ago; perhaps to the painter's room," quietly rejoined Murrell, as he closed the door upon her freshly alarmed physiognomy. "Was it possible that Mr. Hinks?—she had thought better of him!" murmured the woman, as she ascended another passage.

When I had returned from the passenger office, the landlady asked me if we would oblige her by taking tea in her little back parlor instead of in our own room: there would be nobody there but Mr. Hinks, the portrait painter. "That woman was not in his room; it was a scandal to say so. As nice a gentleman, and genteel as goes,—though, to be sure, he never would wear a cravat and he let his hair grow more than was becoming: but of course, that was no fault of hers; only it was natural for her to take an interest in him, as he had been a lodger with her, next June would be four years; and had paid up so regular, and never asked her even to whitewash his walls; though the Lord o' mercy knew they needed it bad enough, for the artist, who had occupied the attic before

Mr. Hinks took it, had marked them all up with charcoal and chalk drawings, nobody knew what ; only Mr. Hinks wouldn't have them washed off, because, he said, they were the traces of genius."

Accordingly, at the tea-table, we met the well-recommended portrait painter, a long-haired, light-complexioned middle-aged little man, with a large nose and a benevolent expression which at once prepossessed us in his favor. He entertained us all with his chat about the Art World ; and, as I politely expressed a desire to examine some of his own paintings, when our repast was ended, he invited us to accompany him to his studio.

It was on the fourth floor, and did not differ in appearance essentially from any other portrait painter's room that I had seen, except that the walls were curiously frescoed with the rudest materials ; yet not inartistically, and, here and there, was an architectural drawing, indicating considerable ability. At the base of one of these rough sketches was a name almost obliterated because written only with charcoal. I breathed quicker as I read the well-remembered autograph of Cale Wright ! My God ! was it possible that we were at length upon the track of the wanderer ? I could see by the emotion of Lu, that she, too, had detected the signature of her husband, though, of his first name, it gave only the initial.

"You are struck with these rude designs," said the painter, observing our fixed attention ; "they are not mine. Crude as they are, the hand that drew them, five years ago, in this humble attic, is now a celebrity in the studios of Rome and Florence ! You have been out of the world, or you must have heard of Wright ?"

"Where is he now ?" asked Lu, in a low tone, and

endeavoring to control her agitation, but still gazing at the writing on the wall.

"Still in Europe," replied Mr. Hinks, as he placed one of his own portraits upon the easel, and sought the best light for it, "but Thompson tells me, that at last accounts, he was at Palermo, about to embark for America."

"Indeed!" said I, while Lu, resisting Waifwood's effort to attract her admiration to the complacent painter's picture, clung almost spasmodically to my arm and gazed into my face, with an expression I shall never forget. Her olive complexion was ashy pale, and she trembled violently.

"It is doubtful if Mr. Wright will ever return to this country, however," added the artist, wiping off the portrait with his handkerchief. "There is no true appreciation of genius in America. He is said to have a positive dislike for his native land. An eccentric fellow, sir: devoted to his art, and avoiding society. Brown says he is a prey to melancholy, and attributes it to disappointment in love before he left this country." [Lu's grasp upon my arm was now like the pressure of a vice.] "If your lady is at all interested in Wright by what I have said, she will be glad to know that there is a painting of his in the gallery, now on exhibition in Broadway. It is a gothic interior; a magnificent thing! You ought to see it. I shall be most happy to take you to the gallery. I have some poor things there of my own."

"Be calm, Lu," whispered I, "you shake like an aspen!"

She made no response, but sank into a chair; her whole frame shaking with uncontrollable nervous excite-

ment. Waifwood and the good-natured painter were much alarmed, but by holding her rigidly-contracting hands in my own, while the little girl applied some water to her head, I soon restored Lu to herself again ; much to the relief of Mr. Hinks who had stood helplessly by, ejaculating in an undertone, many times, "Dear me ! dear me !"

"I am quite well now," said Lu, rising, but looking a little strangely still ; "let us go to the gallery !" She took my arm as she spoke.

"It will not be lighted for an hour yet, and I fear you are not quite strong enough to-night, madam," said the painter, almost tenderly.

"I must go to-night, even if I have to go alone," rejoined the willful woman. Making allowance for her intense interest, I yielded the point, though inclined to object.

The result was, that in the evening, escorted by the hospitable and attentive Mr. Hinks, we visited the exhibition. There were numerous admirable works of art ; but passing all the rest indifferently, we hurried our cicerone on until he brought us to a collection consisting exclusively of contributions by American artists abroad.

Conspicuous amongst these was a painting upon canvas, about six feet by four, representing a gothic interior in ruins. It was admirably executed in architectural grandeur, foreshadowing and color, but for none of these did Lu have one word of praise, one scrutinizing look. Her whole attention was fixed upon a single object in the foreground. It was the author of the work, himself ; seated upon a fragment of the ruin ; his brush and palette dropped listlessly by his side ; his cheek resting upon his

hand, and his whole aspect entirely in keeping with the feeling of solitude conveyed in the scene around him. The likeness to Cale was sufficiently approximate to make a profound impression upon his deserted wife, and I saw the tears course down her cheeks, though she averted her face to hide them.

Fortunately, we were so early that we were the only spectators in that section of the gallery; and as I had no difficulty in attracting the attention of Waifwood and Mr. Hinks to a horse picture by Fisher, Lu was left to the indulgence of her feelings, without observation.

"When your lady shall have finished her examination of that painting," said the artist, "I will conduct you to the portrait gallery in the other room where my own humble daubs have been honored with prominent place; though the light might have been better, it is true."

"Let us leave her to the enjoyment of Wright's picture," I rejoined, taking his arm and leading off; "she was always fond of that sort of thing. It accords well with the sadness of her own spirit."

"She is a Cuban, is she not?" said Mr. Hinks, in a lower tone.

"A family bereavement," I rejoined, feigning to have misunderstood him. I fancied I heard her sob; she was evidently tremulous with emotion. "Waifwood, my dear, you can remain with your mother, and join us in the next room, when she shall have done looking at the pictures in this," I added; quite willing to change the subject just broached by the artist at my side. The child was quite willing to remain, for she had a keen taste for animal paintings of which there were a number in that portion of the exhibition. Her numerous exclamations

of delight had the effect to divert Lu from her rapt attention, and excite in her mind a more cheerful feeling; even a degree of agreeable anticipation. "He is lonely and discontented," she said to herself; "perhaps we shall soon meet again, and it may be my precious privilege in another land, to minister to his wants, to relieve his solitude, to be again his wife! oh, it would be happiness to be even his poor slave!" Then her countenance clouded again, and she murmured, "should he disown me! but no, I will not think so meanly of him! I am the mother of his child; he will be proud of Waifwood, and love me for her sake. May heaven hasten the time when we shall meet, in a land unstained by bondage.

CHAPTER XLIX.

OLD FRIENDS AND NEW PLOTS.

DURING our stay in the gallery, rascally work was going on at home. Availing himself of the temporary absence of old Wright from his hotel, Murrell removed the fire-board, pushed aside the rubbish, and completing the perforation, which he had already done much to accomplish, crawled through the hole into the apartment on the other side of the party-wall. It was the lodgings of the Georgian planter and speculator, sure enough.

"I'm not exactly in trim for a social call," chuckled the house-breaker, glancing at the reflection of his begrimed face and shirt sleeves in the glass upon a bureau, "and as I don't want to see company, I'll just bolt this door. The old cock's gone to Harlem, but it's well to make sure that he won't bolt in upon me, unexpectedly. I don't want to shoot him, if I can help it."

Then he went to a large, strong box, or chest, which stood in the corner. It was iron-bound, and better secured than trunks usually are; but Murrell had picklocks, and the box was soon opened. Washing his smutty hands with the utmost *sang froid*, he wiped them dry,

and returned eagerly to the chest. It contained both clothing and papers; but amongst these the robber found nothing that he would have given a pin for. At the bottom, were numerous geological specimens; chiefly, or all of them, gold quartz rock from the North Carolina and Georgia mines, of no appreciable value except as samples.

"No money, neither coin nor notes?" muttered the disappointed thief, hastling the contents over more hastily than before, in his impatience to find something worth appropriating; "what has the old villain done with the proceeds of his sales? This is enough to make a saint swear!" Then, with a shower of curses, he dropped the lid, and locked it down. Failing to find in the room any thing that he deemed worth taking away, unbolting the door, (leaving it accessible by key on the outside as before,) and went as he came, but in a far less cheerful frame of mind, through the hole again.

In a confession made by him years afterward, the wretch denied having taken any thing from Lu's room; but, as subsequent to his departure, she missed from her trunk a gold necklace, and the miniature which he himself had once given her as the portrait of her husband, I think he might as well have admitted that, before he left the house, he entered her room, in our absence, and appropriated these articles.

Perhaps the coolest thing done by Murrell, at this time, was his manner of leaving. Noticing that we had returned, as we went, in a hired hack, as soon as we had entered the door, the rogue accosted the driver from his chamber window, telling him that he had another job for him: and in a few moments, he made his appearance at

the portal, trunk in hand, unobserved by any one in the house. A minute later, he was rattling over the pavements, toward the eastern side of the city.

Strolling forth with the artist, we came up presently to a brilliantly illumined building, upon the walls of which was the announcement of a new opera, and a benefit for the author. Inviting Mr. Hinks to accept a ticket, I conducted him in, and was pleased to see a large audience of New York fashionables, apparently well-satisfied both with themselves and the performance, which was now about half-finished. When it was over, there was a general call for the author. In a few moments, he appeared before the curtain, bowing first to the centre boxes, next to those on the right, then to the left, and lastly with hand placed impressively upon his white waistcoat, to the pit, where I sat.

"By the great hornspoon," I exclaimed, unable to suppress my surprise, "that's Whytal!"

The bowing beneficiary was near enough to hear me, and responded with a covert thrust of the tongue into his cheek, and a wink. A person sitting in front of me had been attracted, also, by my expletive, and turned around to look at me. Apparently, he was quite as much surprised to see me as I had been to see Whytal. It was Perrin, the noble-hearted tutor of Lu and the Morris girls! About six years had elapsed since we parted from each other in the highlands of Georgia; but we recognized each other at a glance, and grasped each other's hands, cordially, but silently, for Whytal was making his speech. The latter informed the audience, that he was author of the libretto only: his coadjutor, the composer of the beautiful musical creation,

to which they had listened with so many flattering indications of pleasure and approval, had left the house ; but in his behalf as well as on his own account, he begged leave to express his most heartfelt acknowledgments to that crowded and fashionable audience, and announced the opera for repetition on the following evening. He retired amid another storm of applause and bouquets, two or three of which latter he bore away in triumph, rendered a little awkward by the fall of another upon his head, to the great amusement of Perrin and myself. We received a wink from him as he made his exit at the wing, and in a few minutes he came around to us in the lobby, and greeting us in his old cordial manner, insisted that we should go with him to Windust's restaurant, to take a bite, and have a good talk about our mutual adventures ; after which, if we liked, he would introduce us to the " Novelty Club,—a glorious set of fellows in the musical and dramatic line, and at the very top of the profession."

It was late, but Perrin consenting, I offered no objection, though I would have preferred to return to my lodgings. Still, I was not without a desire to have some further conversation with both of these gentlemen, as it was likely to be the only opportunity for a long while.

A short walk brought us to the restaurant, and in a few minutes we were snugly ensconced in a stall, and doing full justice to a capital mutton-chop and Windust's excellent Scotch ale ; relating meanwhile a portion at least of our respective experiences.

Perrin, who had been driven out of Georgia as an abolitionist, had lived in indigence for a year or two, in Philadelphia, dependent upon the precarious livelihood afforded to scholarship in those days by publishers of

scientific books; but at length he was so fortunate as to obtain a professorship in Columbia College; since which he had done very well, "though still a bachelor."

The erratic Whytal, after leaving me, had served awhile in the Treasury office at Washington, but becoming tired of that humdrum life, and the dust of the capital, had joined an English hunting party who were about leaving that city for the western prairies. That amusement worn out, in the course of another year he had returned to New York and become an editor. In the course of time, he fell in with a composer of music, who had induced him to write the plot and libretto of the opera which we had just listened to. "And with infinite satisfaction, my friend, I assure you," said I: "it was a great triumph." "Yes, sir," he rejoined complacently, "my fortune is made. I have at length discovered my forte: it is the opera. I shall devote my life to it." "Poh, poh!" said I, laughing at the recollection of his manifold changes; "before the year is over you will be at something else." "No," he replied, firmly, "from this time forth and forever, I am a composer."

"By the way, Major," said Perrin, what became of that cut-throat, Murrell?" He little thought that the villain himself, by the merest chance, occupied the next stall to us, and heard every word we uttered. I had not as yet told them of the altered fortunes of Lu, but warmed by the ale into more communicativeness, I now related to them her persecution at the hands of Murrell, and how she and her child had at length triumphed over his villainies, and were now about to embark with me for Europe, not merely to educate Waifwood, but in the

lively anticipation (born to us since our arrival in New York,) of a re-union with Cale Wright in Italy.

"By heavens!" exclaimed Whytal, swallowing a raw oyster which he had in his mouth, and clapping his hands together in a burst of enthusiasm, "what a magnificent plot for an opera!"

"Poor Lu!" said Perrin, "I did my best to give her as good an education as her more fortunate half-sisters, but it was not without some misgivings of its influence upon her future happiness. She was apt, sensitive and high spirited, above her position. I foresaw that nothing but unhappiness was in store for her in a land of slaves. Thank God, she is soon to leave it. But you must let me see her, first."

I assented, and made an appointment to meet him in the morning, at ten. We were to sail at noon. Whytal would have us drink a bottle of champagne with him, but we resolutely declined, and soon after parted for the night.

Meantime, what had the senior Wright been about, and how had he taken the violence done to his room during his excursion with some convivial stock-brokers to High Bridge? To be candid with you, gentle reader, the old planter had imbibed so freely of stimulating drinks before starting, and on the way thither and back, that upon ascending to his room, with great difficulty, upon his return at night, he dropped incontinently upon the floor and slept soundly till the bell rang for breakfast. Hastily concluding, that a mason had been at work on the chimney, as his own things appeared to be all right, without giving the matter a second thought, he washed his great pallid face, and descended to the dinner-hall.

Breakfast over, this mountain of flesh was about to enter the reading-room when he was accosted by a small fashionably dressed man, with light hair, aquiline nose, Calcutta complexion, and a pair of blue spectacles, that pretty well concealed the color of his eyes.

"Squire Wright, of Georgia, I believe, sir?" said this person interrogatively; at the same time raising his hat from a head of flaxen hair, not indigenous to his own scalp. The planter assented rather awkwardly, and sat down like a ton of lead in the arm-chair indicated to him by the other, who evidently had a communication for his private ear.

"My name is Blabitt, sir; a distant relative of Mr. Wright's; but that's neither here nor there. You are a slave-holder; so am I. We have a common interest." And here the gentlemen shook hands. "Glad to know you, sir," said the planter, civilly. "It's a good institution, sir."

"Good? sir, it is noble!" rejoined the stranger, (who was Murrell in disguise.) "It is the bulwark of our liberties; the very corner-stone of our republic."

"That's so," replied the hood-winked old man; "I used to say it when I was in the Legislatur."

"I know you did," rejoined the pseudo Blabitt, "I often heard of you. Short speeches, but powerful influence. You ought to be in Congress, sir. But to business! Some year or two ago you lost a valuable slave, did you not? Lu was her name. Almost white, and educated like a lady; more's the pity."

"That's her," replied the planter; his flattered vanity now giving place to avarice; "I'd give a heap to get her again."

"She had a child—she still has one," continued the stranger. "Your own son is the father of it. I know it."

"That don't matter," replied the human chattel holder, "the child's mother bein' a slave—"

"The child is a slave, too," interrupted Murrell, "of course I understand that. Now to the point," and he lowered his voice as he spoke; "I happen to know where Lu is."

The great saucer-eyes of the corpulent man opened with wonder, which gave place to a joy that gave some thing like a faint smile to his large, round, expressionless countenance, and he ejaculated "Mighty!"

"If I'll put you on the track of this fugitive slave, that you can obtain possession of her by legal process, will you give me the child for my reward?"

"Sartin!" replied the planter; "but how—how is this ar to be done? Whar is she?"

"You won't squirm because it's a sort of granddaughter of yours, will you? You are to give me a clean bill of sale of the little girl, you understand, Squire Wright?"

The old man agreed most implicitly to the terms. He rather preferred on the whole not to have the child, he said.

"You shall write it down," rejoined the pretender, producing a writing from his pocket-book. "Here are the terms of the bargain, and there on the table are pen and ink. Be good enough to put your signature to this." The weighty man would have liked a little more deliberation, but as the other assured him that Lu was about to take passage from that very port, within an hour or

two, unless stayed by his, the stranger's intervention, he appended, with much effort and some perspiration, his cramped signature to the document.

"Now, Squire," said Murrell folding the paper and putting it into his pocket, "come with me to the Commissioner. We have no time to lose. We must demand possession of Lu and her child under the Fugitive Slave Law. I am your witness that they are yours. A dealer in South Carolina, got them, some how, after they ran away from you, and sold them to Judge Gascon, on a false title, founded upon a forged bill of sale, purporting to bear your signature."

"Oh, the villain!" said the planter. "I'll have him up before the Legislatur."

"Lu has a good friend in a Major in the government service," said Murrell, "but we'll grease the hinges at the Commissioner's and there'll be no trouble in proving your claim. I only wish we could involve this Major (in Georgia, when I knew him, he was a doctor) and lock him up on a charge of kidnapping these slaves of yours. Here's a hack," he added, as arm in arm with the Squire, they emerged from the hotel to the sidewalk in front, "let us get in, for it is hardly nine yet, and we may have to drive to the magistrate's residence."

Leaving her enemies to consummate their machinations against her happiness and personal security, the reader will return to Lu.

CHAPTER L.

THE DENOUEMENT.

It had subserved our convenience to take our break fast, and go on board the elegant and capacious London packet, at an early hour in the morning. The vessel was not to sail until noon; which would give me plenty of time to keep my appointment with Perrin, whom I was to conduct to an interview with Lu.

"Don't be gone long, dear Guardy, will you?" cried • Waifwood, putting her arms around my neck, and pressing her rosy cheek against mine.

"Yes, hasten back, I beseech you," said her mother. "I don't know why it is, but I have an indefinable presentiment of evil. I wish we were already on our voyage."

"It is as good as begun;" I rejoined, cheerfully. "A truce to melancholy, Lu! you are nervous, this morning; the effect of your agitation, yesterday. I will fetch your old friend and teacher, the good Dominie Perrin, to you, shortly; and then you will be quite happy."

"I will try; you are so kind," she rejoined, and essayed to smile. "At least, I will welcome him with

all the heart I have, for he was my earliest benefactor. He was the truest friend I ever had; 'until I knew you!' and she pressed my hand between both of her own; her countenance beaming with gratitude.

"You forget that brave and generous old soul, Major McClure, and his kind-hearted dame!" said I.

"I don't!" cried my little beauty. "Nor do I," rejoined her mother. "I shall always remember them with the affection of a daughter. They deserve a more comfortable home in their old age, and a residence among a better people."

"When I return from Europe, I must get them to come and live with me," I added.

"You will never leave us!" said Lu, deprecatingly. "How selfish I am! of course you will have to do so; but I shall never return to America."

"That," said I, "is Cale's own sentiment, and in his arms you will find all the country, all the home, all the love, that your heart will crave."

Tears filled her eyes as I uttered these words, and she pressed my hand, as she rejoined, "It is too much bliss for poor Lu to anticipate. I dare not think of it, lest the cup of joy should be rudely dashed from my presumptuous lips! We may not find him. He may have gone to some country more remote than Italy. Perhaps, he has already embarked for the United States, and we may pass his ship, and see it, without knowing that he is on board."

"Nay," I replied, smiling encouragingly, "though it should be as prolonged and difficult a search as that of Telemachus for his royal father, Ulysses, we will find your husband, you may bet your life upon it."

"My life would be worthless, if we should fail," she rejoined sadly.

"And then——" I began to ask, but paused ; leaving the sentence unfinished.

"Then," responded Lu, in a low but resolute tone, gloomily hinting at self-destruction, "I would lay it down !"

She left me as she spoke, and went into her state-room. Little Waifwood's suffused eyes betrayed her sympathy with her mother's unhappiness, but it was transient, and in a few moments, amused by the monotonous, yet not unmusical "Yo heave ho !" of a number of jolly sailors, who were lowering baggage and ship-stores into the deep hold of the vessel, through the hatchway, she smiled through her tears, and led me toward them.

Little, if any, American produce, except cotton, was wanted in Europe that year, and as the vessel had none of the great staple to carry this time, her hold was nearly empty ; giving us the better chance of a quick passage.

Leaving Waif with her mother, I left the ship just as a distinguished member of Congress, who had recently received from Mr. Van Buren's administration an appointment abroad, alighted from a handsome carriage and followed his baggage on board. I had met him in Washington, and heard one of his elaborate speeches in vindication and support of the Fugitive Slave Law. He was a tall, slender, elderly gentleman, clad in black broadcloth, and wearing an expression of countenance quite common in good Christian people, and not wanting in dignity. Let us call him, (not to give offence,) the Honorable Mr. Warwick. Recognizing me, he bowed

but with a degree of natural reserve, as I passed him, to fulfill my appointment to meet Perrin at ten.

On my way up the pier, (it was on the East River side, near Wall street,) I met a carriage containing a thin gentleman in blue spectacles, a large, fat man, whose face I did not see, and two civic officers in uniform. "Fellow passengers, perhaps," said I to myself, Glancing back at this company, as they passed on, I saw the spectaclad person looking out toward me; but I gave it a transient thought only, and went on my way to Holt's hotel, where I was to see the quondam parson, Lu's old preceptor. Had I had the least inkling of the errand of those people, I should have been in quite another frame of mind.

They went, it appears, directly aboard the ship in which we were to have sailed, and demanded of the captain a look at his passenger-list. "A request would have been sufficient," grumbled the ship-master; "by what right do you order me, on board my own vessel?" "Under the authority of the United States, whose deputies we are," replied one of the officials a little pompously. "Of course you know, captain," said the other marshal, confidentially, "that you endanger your vessel, and render yourself personally liable, in taking a fugitive slave on board."

"Fugitive slave!" retorted the mariner, "I don't know any thing about it; there's no blacky aboard my craft, unless it be my cook, and he has sailed with me these ten years."

By this time, the hands had left their work at the main hatch, and collected around. Waifwood's attention had been attracted, also, and without a definite idea of its

earing upon her own fate, she ran to her mother's state-room, and gave her, hurriedly, some child-like description of what was going on. The poor woman could hardly refrain from uttering a shriek of dismay and anguish. Drawing her daughter quickly into the little apartment assigned for her use during the passage, she locked the door and dropped into a seat. All her strength, for the moment, deserted her, and in an agony of apprehension, she whispered hoarsely, "My God, my God, they would make slaves of us again! My presentiment was true."

"No, no, dear mamma! Do not feel bad! They can not be so wicked. You know the good Judge Gaecon gave us our freedom," cried little Waifwood, tearful and pale, yet hopeful still, as she imprinted upon her mother's wan countenance and trembling lips some comforting kisses.

"Alas! my unhappy offspring, they have defrauded us of our liberty once before, and now will repeat the terrible wrong again, if they can," said Lu, weeping freely and clasping her child to her heart, "ah!" she exclaimed, rising, for she heard approaching footsteps, "what if in their demoniac malice they should take you from me, my darling! Oh, God, shall there be no peace for us but in death? How long shall wicked men do these things; how long shall thy vengeance be stayed?"

"Open the door!" said the gentleman in blue glasses; nodding the state-room fastened. "Come out, quietly, my good woman," said one of the deputies, rapping upon it with a pair of handcuffs, "and you shall have a handsome pair of bracelets. Open and come out, or we will force the lock. You are a runaway slave; we

know you! Your master, Mr. Wright, has come to carry you back to your old friends in Georgia. Come out!"

"It's a bloody shame!" said a sailor, but he was quieted. Waifwood could no longer restrain her sobs. "That is her child," said the man in the glasses. Let's have them out. There is no time to spare; the ship is to sail at twelve."

Unexpectedly the door suddenly opened and the hunted-down woman rushed by them into the main cabin, and thence to the deck, followed by her daughter, the men pursuing.

The Hon. Mr. Warwick was there, a little heart-sick, to his credit be it spoken, but curious, like the sailors and some others who were present, to see the fugitives and witness their appearance under arrest. With her dark hair flowing upon her shoulders, and eyes red with weeping, Lu turned instinctively to this group, and kneeling to the chief personage, seized his hand, and begged his protection.

"Poor soul, poor soul!" was all he could say, for the moment. "Yes," she cried, "I have a soul; shall it be enslaved? Oh, sir, have pity upon me and my child! I declare to God, we are free."

"Why, Mr. Wright, surely this woman is not a slave!" cried Mr. Warwick. "I have often defended the title of the master, you well know, but surely—surely—"

"Surely theory is one thing and practice another!" sneered the spectacled man.

"Rise, my poor creature," said Warwick, kindly; and she stood up before him. "I will do what I can for you. Did you ever see this gentleman before?" and he

pointed to the corpulent planter, who stood close at hand, his broad back against the taffrail.

"He is the father of my husband," replied Lu. My father, a planter, left me to his care."

Old Wright would have contradicted her, but lacking words, his friend, Blabitt, said for him, "She was a daughter of a slave of her father, and if ever young Wright married her, the tie was unlawful, of course, in a slave state. Her father sold her as he had a perfect title to do, to my relative here, Mr. Wright. He had her for some years, during which time, she gave birth to a child. There it is. You may well exclaim at its fairness and beauty, gentlemen, but the thing is a slave none the less. This woman whose name is Lu ran away, or was kidnapped, and sold (fraudulently of course) to the late Judge Gascon, of South Carolina. He deemed his title good."

"But it wasn't, though," interrupted Wright. "Not long since," continued his friend, "Judge Gascon died, and by his will manumitted the child, and so enriched her that she was enabled subsequently to purchase her mother's freedom. They came hither, and engaged passage for England. To the truth of this statement I will make oath."

"This is a very strange case!" said Mr. Warwick. "Not at all, not at all," rejoined the swift witness, "it is quite common." "The greater the shame, sir!" retorted the politician; and turning to the fat planter, he asked if he could swear that he had had a perfect title to the woman, and had never disposed of his interest in her; to which the old man asserted that Lu was still his property, and he was ready to be qualified to the truth of it.

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"And what evidence have you, unfortunate woman?" said Mr. Warwick, turning with manifest dislike from the old obese. "Oh, sir, I have none!" she replied. "At least none at hand. The friend under whose protection I was to make this voyage, left the ship only a few minutes since, and may be gone an hour. I beg that you will wait and hear him," she added, addressing a deputy marshal. "O, wait, wait, for heaven's sake, or I shall go mad!" She pressed her hands upon her temples, as she spoke, and gazed with a look of wild appeal to the officer who was approaching with the iron wrists.

Poor little Waifwood, crying as if her heart would break, stood half encircled by a group of sailors, several of whom had wet eyes themselves, as they strove in their rough way to comfort her. "Never you fear, darling," said one, "they shan't take you at any rate." And then he added, in a louder tone to the officer, "belay there; you land-lubber, would you put the darbies on a woman?"

But the deputy was not to be deterred by a little popular indignation. Lu threw off his grasp, and ran to the ship's side. Believing her intention to be to throw herself into the sea, a number of hands were extended to prevent her. With almost superhuman strength, she disengaged herself, and ran suddenly to the open hatchway, which gaped like a fearful chasm at her feet. Expecting that the frenzied creature would instantly cast herself down through the decks into the almost empty hold, all stood petrified and speechless—all except the poor child whose shrieks rent the air,—“Mother! mother!”

This cry, at once of terror and appeal, wrung every

feeling heart. Better still, it stayed poor Lu in her fall purpose. While almost swaying forward over the open hatchway too far for safety, she heard that agonized remonstrance, and recovering herself, trembled upon the brink, paused, and looked around. The two officers made a single movement toward her, but stopped, appalled, when in a hoarse, resolute voice, she declared that if they approached a step nearer she would destroy her life. "Come away! come away!" exclaimed several angry voices to the embarrassed functionaries of the law. "She would be as good as her word," said Mr. Warwick. "It's just like her!" added old Wright; his large white face more pallid than ever; "she tried to kill herself, once, when she lived with me."

They were kept in this dilemma for a long time, for Lu was thoroughly in earnest. At length, the gentleman in the blue goggles suggested that they should entrap her by sending her child to her, in hopes that the sight of her weeping little one would "break her down," in which case they would have no difficulty in capturing her. There were some that murmured, but presently Waifwood was sent forward, and with eyes still tearful, and words touchingly soothing and affectionate, she slowly and carefully approached the mother whom it was expected that she would innocently betray into the hands of her captors.

Poor Lu was not so crazed as not to see through the trick. Catching the half-frightened Waif in her arms she kissed her eagerly; then placing one foot again upon the combing of the hatch, turned to her persecutors, and again stayed their advance by threatening to leap with her child down to the death that would ensue.

Naturally enough, this scene on the deck of the packet had attracted a crowd of spectators, composed not merely of passengers; and so absorbed were all in the excitement afforded by the attempted capture of a fugitive who was holding the officers completely at bay, without a weapon at her command, that the entrance of a foreign vessel, just up from Quarantine, into the adjoining dock was scarcely noticed. Two persons—one a sea-worn, but well-clad little old man; the other not yet middle-aged, light complexioned, larger than his companion, and evidently superior both in intellectual calibre and cultivation. His attire was sombre and careless, yet not without grace; and his well-bearded face, though it had a certain nobleness of feature, was haggard either with study or melancholy.

Attracted like the rest by the excitement on board the packet, these freshly-arrived foreigners, if such they were, ascended to the deck of the vessel, and confronted the scene before them. As they did so, a loud cry of joy was uttered by Lu, and, the next moment, she was in the arms of her returned husband! I saw it all; for I too had just come aboard. And so did the good man, Perrin, who was with me; and with tears streaming from his eyes as he joyfully regarded the group, father, mother and child, now at length re-united, never to be again divided, he assured me, that those few moments were worth more than any one year of happiness ever yet vouchsafed him.

"Good morning, Professor Perrin," said Mr. Warwick, who had met him at the college, at the last commencement, "this gentleman is Captain William McClure, who

has just arrived from Palermo, in company with the happy husband, yonder !”

The person thus introduced was no other than the maritime brother of Major McClure. Cordially shaking my friend and myself with both hands, he assured us that this opportune meeting of the companion of his voyage with his wife, so entirely unexpected, made him quite leaky about the nose and eyes, and in corroboration of this confession, he blew his olfactories with trumpet-like resonance.

“This woman is my—” one of the deputies began to say, as he stepped forward to lay a hand upon Lu, but he was checked by a look from her new-found protector, and faltered.

“This lady,” said Cale, enclosing Lu with his left arm, and motioned off the functionary with his disengaged hand, “this lady is my wife.”

“If your name is Wright, as I presume it to be,” (here Cale bowed an affirmative,) “your own father denies your assertion.”

For the first time, during this scene, the eyes of the father and son met. The old man’s countenance, blank of every expression save a kind of mingled dismay and amazement, made a feeble effort at recognition, but it amounted only to a slight elevation of his little eyebrows, the open mouth uttered only a sigh. Cale’s emotion at the sight of his parent was only a passing pang, and he calmly yet resolutely rejoined, as he indicated his wife and child, “He refused to acknowledge these as mine; now, I disown him. Henceforth and forever, we are strangers.”

“My son ! my—Caleb !” gasped the planter, but the

returned exile heeded him not, nor so much as looked at him again.

"She is my wife, I say," he repeated to the hesitating official; "in the sight of God, lawfully wedded to me."

"What evidence have we of that?" said the deputy.

"Perhaps my evidence may be worth something, in this case," said Perrin, stepping forward, and receiving an introduction to the marshal by Mr. Warwick. "Though now in collegiate service, sir, in 1832, and for a year or two later, I was a licensed clergyman, in Georgia, during which time I united these two persons in the holy bonds of matrimony; and," he added solemnly, "whom God hath joined, let no man put asunder."

"Magnificent!" exclaimed Whytal, who, a few minutes before, had come aboard "to see us off;" and he turned aside to make a memorandum in his pocket diary; while Cale and Lu greeted the dominie affectionately, and Waifwood was taken to his embrace.

Then addressing the officers, he said, "Let me also say to you, gentlemen, who have that abominable law to enforce, that Mr. Morlis, her father, sold her in his last sickness to that unworthy man, yonder, for a merely nominal sum, with provision, solemnly enjoined, when upon his death bed, that it should be optional with her to accept her freedom when of age. This he dare not deny; or that she was free when this my child, was born."

Poor old Wright without a word of response—for his wits, always rather muggy, were now in a state of total eclipse,—took the proffered arm of the pseudo Blabitt,

who had already picked his pocket of a well-filled wallet, and was about to leave the ship, when suddenly he turned to his son and would have accosted him, had not Cale abruptly taken his wife's arm within his own, and, followed by Perrin and Waifwood, proceeded to the cabin.

Lu had beckoned to me to follow, but their joy was sacred to themselves; and, besides, I had conceived a sudden interest in the gentleman with the blue goggles; my suspicions of whom I communicated to Whytal.

Laying a hand upon the impostor's arm, I said to him in a tone of mock politeness, "Must you leave us so soon?" "It would certainly afford me pleasure, sir," he coolly replied, "to prosecute the voyage with you; but—" "Prosecution is not to your fancy," said I, and before he could avoid my clutch at his spectacles, I tore them from his head (for they were tied on) and threw them upon the deck. Almost at the same instant, Whytal, who was standing directly in his rear, did the same by his wig, and the protean villain, Murrell, stood before us, stripped of his disguises! Immediately, pushing his fat companion aside, so hard as to lay him sprawling upon the deck, the rascal made a dash for the pier, but, quick as wink, two of the deck-hands (who had conceived a disgust for him because of the part he had played in the arrest of Lu,) intercepted him and catching him up in their stalwart arms, conveyed him to the open hatchway; and, I don't know but what they would have pitched the affrighted rascal unconditionally down the depths that yawned for him, had not the captain commanded them to forbear. As it was, the handcuffs intended for his victim were put upon him, and he was given in charge of a

police officer. Wright's pocket-book was found upon him, and the discomfitted old fellow, having been lifted from the deck by two other sailors, (one of whom wore the cast-off goggles and the other the wig, to the infinite amusement of the whole company,) was assisted by them to the ship's side, and down the plank, and finally into the carriage occupied by the prisoner (whom he was to testify against,) and the two deputies—the policeman riding outside with the driver. Followed by a crowd of idlers from our deck, greatly to the relief of the captain and his mates, the hack proceeded slowly up the pier, amid the cheers and jeers of the popular escort.

We saw no more of Wright, senior, but a few weeks later, he returned to Georgia, a sadder if not a wiser man; his only consolation being, that he had got the villain Murrell safely locked up, for some years to come, in the state prison, at Sing-Sing.

The little incident just narrated was scarcely over, when Cale and Lu called me to come and take part in their counsels, in the cabin. The reception given me by the former was truly grateful to my feelings, for it was full of friendly remembrance and heartfelt appreciation; yet it was more than I merited. Willing to change the subject, I said to Lu, with a smile, that now I presumed she would abandon her intention of proceeding directly to Europe.

"Not at all," said Cale; "and it is in regard to this that we want your advice. My sole object in returning to America was to ascertain what had become of this dear soul, my poor Lu. You know that before I left, her mind seemed to be clean gone forever; and our child, both you and I believed to be dead. There appeared to

be no earthly use for my remaining in a society that was hateful to me, as I could be of no use to her. I came to the north, and after a year or more, went to Europe, where I obtained a degree of success and fame as a painter of architectural subjects, interiors of gothic churches, and the classic ruins in Rome. Of this my wife has just told me you have lately become somewhat informed. I was courted, flattered and made money, but was not contented. I tried to drown my melancholy in wine; to dissipate it with the follies of youth; but it was useless, and resulted only in remorse. My conscience began to accuse me of cruelty to Lu, in forever abandoning her. I was now provided with ample means to take care of her, it said, and I ought to return to her. I listened to that little voice, at length, and you see the consequence; I am here."

"You are, my dear friend," I replied, "and providentially." He rejoined, smiling, "I understand the allusion, major. Yes, now I am indeed, a believer in special providences." "We may well have the same faith, all of us!" exclaimed Lu. "Amen!" echoed Perrin.

"But now that I have recovered these only objects of my affection in this land of bondage, why should I remain in it a day, nay an hour, longer than is absolutely necessary?"

"Oh, my dear, dear husband!" cried Lu, as she put her arms around his neck and kissed him, "how thankful I am to hear you say so! In this land, we can never feel secure; never have an hour of uninterrupted happiness. Heretofore, there has been nothing save wretchedness for me, and I am sure you could never be contented."

"Yes, dear papa," exclaimed Waifwood, who was sit-

ting upon my knee, "go with us, do. I should be so frightened to stop here any more! Every night I should have had dreams, and be afraid to go to bed for fear they would come and take poor mamma away. A little black boy told me, yesterday, that he felt just so, because his father had run away from a bad master; and he wasn't happy a bit, because he was afraid, all the livelong time, that they would come and take his papa. Oh, how sorry I was for him!"

"It is an awful dread for a child to have; especially at night," said Perrin. "It haunts thousands of trembling hearts amongst the multitude of escaped slaves and their children. I can judge some thing of its power upon young minds by the recollection of a fear that troubled me often when I was a little boy; a fear that my father would be suddenly arrested and imprisoned for debt."

"Yes," said Cale, drawing a long breath, "I will leave the country without delay. I want you, Major, to see the captain and (if you can possibly, prevail upon him,) get him to defer sailing two hours longer, and I will return in this ship to Europe.

"Good!" said I, "I will do my best."

"Of course you remember hearing Major McClure often speak of his sailor brother, Billy, so many years absent?" said Lu. "He came in the same ship with me. Let us have him in here. He is rich, but that is the least of his merit. Ah! here he comes." The captain entered the cabin, just then, escorting McClure, Warwick and Whytal.

"Mr. Wright," said the captain with bluff politeness, "I want you and your good lady and friends, to take a glass of wine with me, now that all our troubles are over.

I have invited in these gentlemen, and I think we might punish a bottle or two of champagne without any difficulty." The old tar, Mac, (as he insisted we should call him,) was received with great kindness, by Lu and her child, for his brother's sake.

With the wine we had some crackers and cheese, and, on the whole, as Mr. Whytal remarked, it was a very agreeable interlude. Of course, captain McClure had many questions to ask about his brother, "For," said he, (putting a large quid of tobacco into his cheek, and offering the box to me,) "if he and his kind-hearted mess-mate, bless their dear old eyes, haven't got enough of the rhino, I have; and I mean to make 'em comfortable."

"Good for you!" said I, slapping the little old sailor, upon the shoulder. "Induce them to locate in the western part of this state, and all three of you pass the remainder of your days together."

"I'll do it, my boy!" said he; and he did. In after years, I passed many a pleasant week with the three happy old souls, in their northern home.

"You are not aware, sir, I presume," said Lu, as she passed the blushing little girl to him, "that you have a namesake of your family here? This is Waifwood McClure. She was named so, in honor of your generous brother, my more than father."

"Is that so?" cried little Mac; his face glowing with pleasure; "then she shall be my heir! Here's an earnest of it!" and taking out a handful of gold sovereigns from one of his pockets, he sat the child upon his knee, and put them into her lap.

The captain of the packet was in the best possible humor; and, under the circumstances, he said, he felt

justified in deferring his hour of sailing until two in the afternoon. This arrangement effected, I went with Cale to superintend the transfer of his baggage, and the delivery of two large paintings which he had executed under an order from the same person who had purchased the picture we had already seen in the Broadway gallery. This business was seasonably accomplished, and at the appointed hour, we had parted from our friends, the last hawser had been cast off, and with a favoring breeze, our voyage was begun.

As long as we could discern a figure on the pier, we saw Perrin, Whytal and Mac, the little sea-captain, occasionally waving to us their good wishes and adieux.

Happy in each other and their child, (who became a great favorite on board,) Mr. Wright and his wife enjoyed our pleasant voyage exceedingly. For Lu and Waifwood it had an inexpressible satisfaction.

How grateful to a beneficent Providence they were, as the good ship, free as a bird, spread its white wings to the breeze, that wafted it far away from a land of bondage to shores where the soul-darkening tie of master and slave could not exist; where the racking fear of recapture would never haunt them; where they would be free, evermore! It seemed as if they loved the very waves; for standing at the vessel's side for hours together, they would watch them admiringly as they rolled their white crests athwart our course; and Waifwood uttered many times a wish, that it had been her lot to live upon the ocean.

"What a type of liberty!" exclaimed Lu, one day, breaking from one of her frequent fits of abstraction, at the ship's side, and alluding to the deep, deep sea.

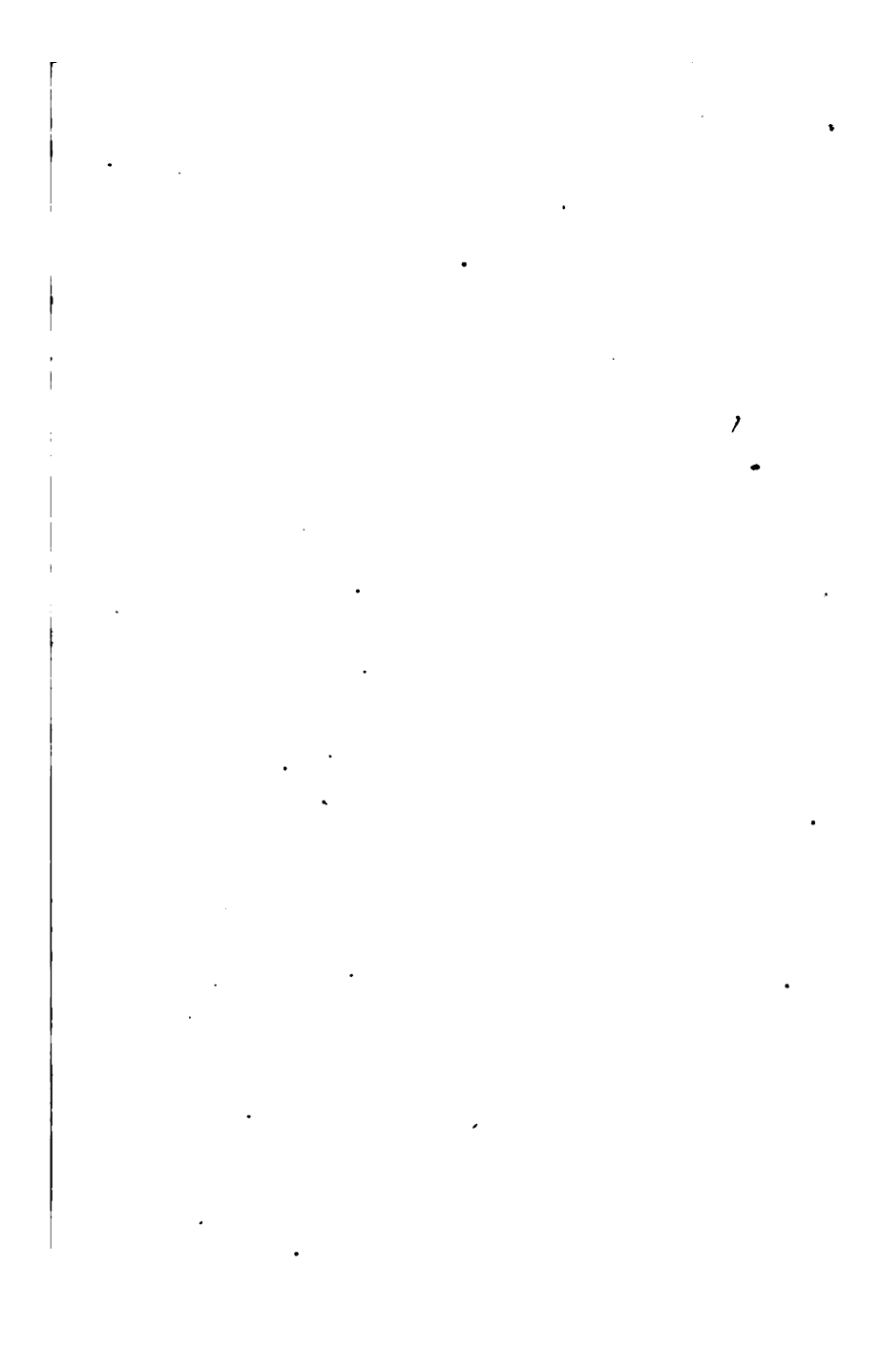
"Yet it has its bonds, the shores," said I.

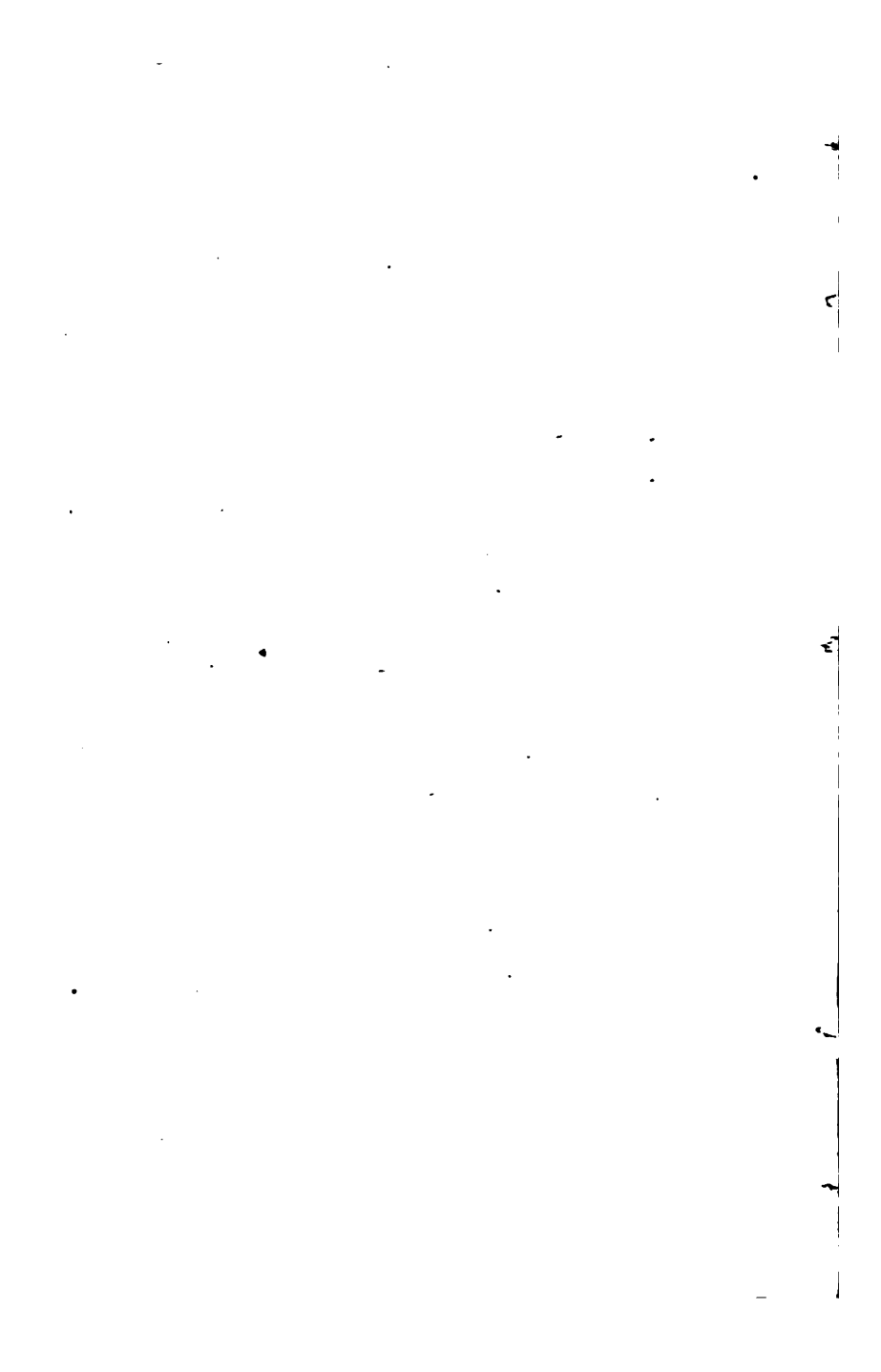
"Its bounds, not its bonds," said Cale. "Man may alter the face of the land: he may level the hills and fill up the valleys; he may make the desert a garden, or the garden a desert: he may build up and pull down great cities: he can even turn the course of the rivers, but who, save God, can alter the face of the great deep, or when shall it be other than the ocean that is, and ever has been since the creation of the world?"

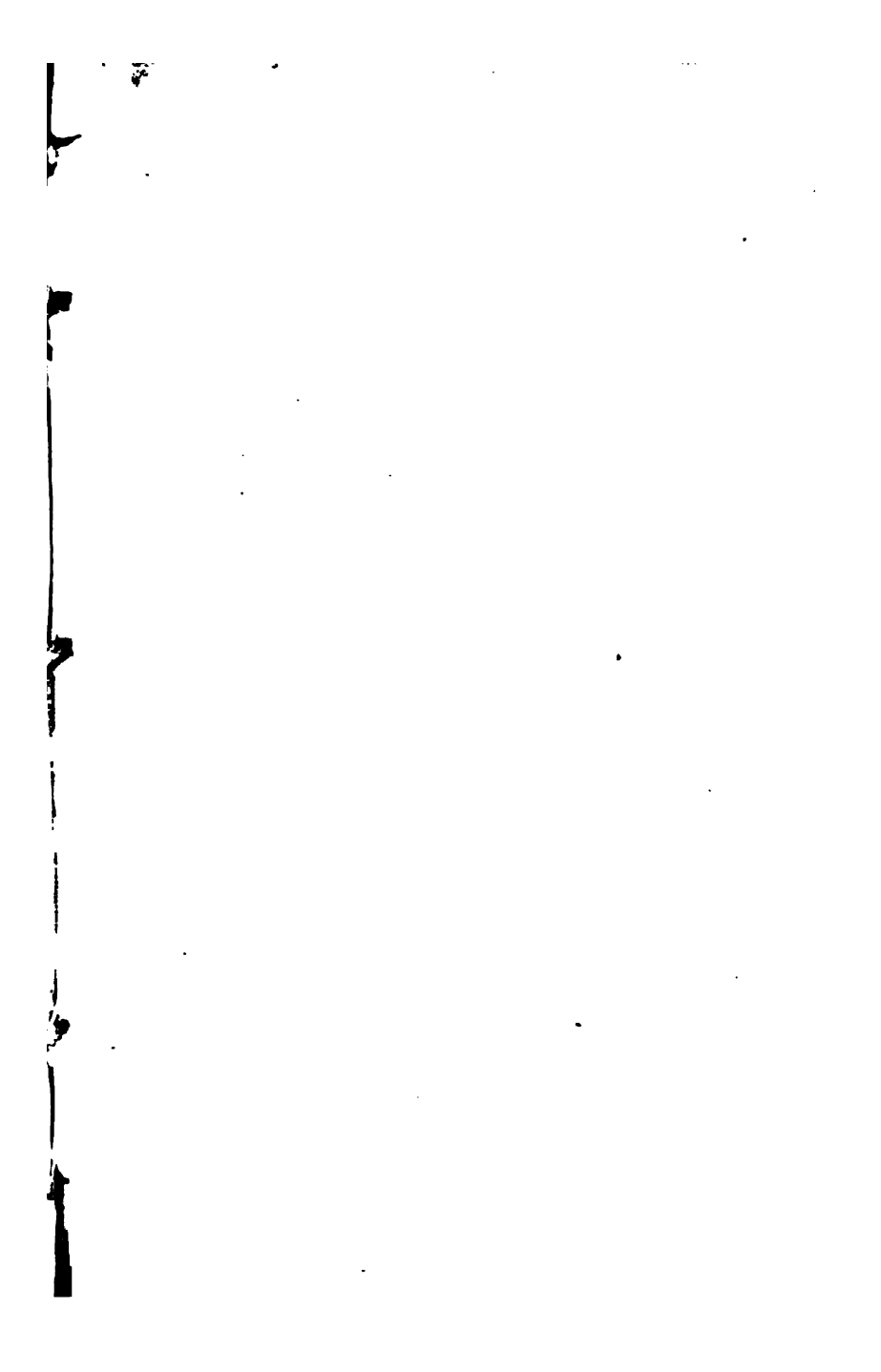
"And this unfathomable element, so infinitely beyond man's power to enthrall it," said Lu, "seems to correspond with personal freedom."

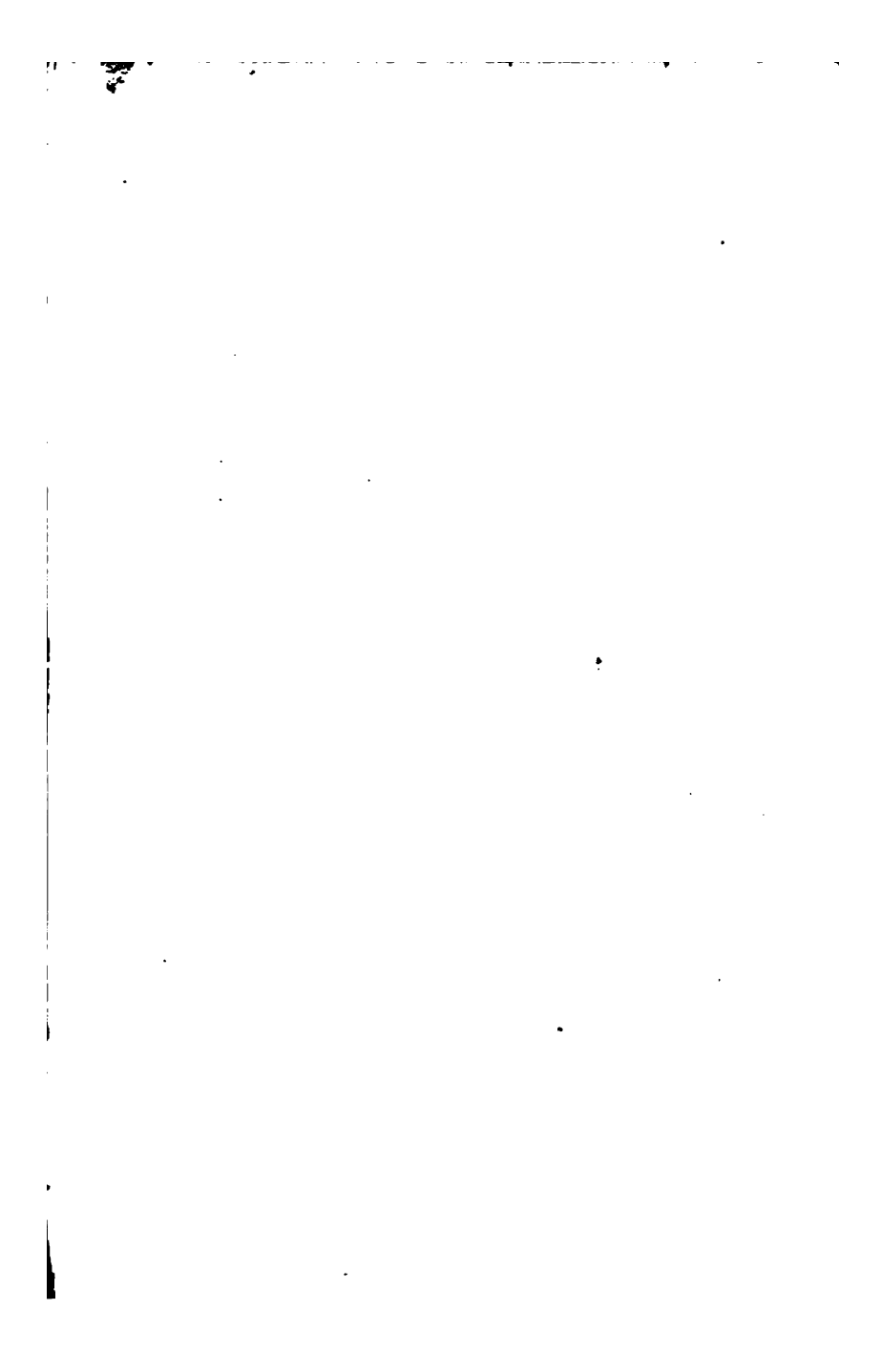
"Yes," rejoined her husband, "for though the fashion of life alters, and manners and customs are moulded at will, and society takes different forms in different ages, liberty—the true liberty of the immortal part of us—is forever the same broad, ample, unchangeable freedom that it was at the beginning."

Our voyage was brief, and ended as pleasantly as it had begun. I will not attempt to describe the agreeable times which I had in traveling with this interesting family over Europe. Suffice it to say, that I left them comfortably established in Florence, where under the best teachers, Waifwood made rapid progress and early distinguished herself by her talent for drawing and painting in water colors. She was entirely happy in her parent's love, and the respect entertained for the community in which they lived; and in after-life attained, herself, to an honorable celebrity.









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